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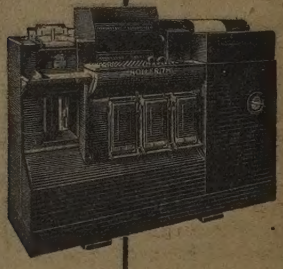

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Journal of the National Association of Local Government Officers

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A livelier Conference?

THIS YEAR'S annual Conference reached several decisions of outstanding importance. It approved, with minor amendments only, the N.E.C. proposals for adaptation of the Association's structure and machinery, designed to give the growing army of members in the health, electricity, gas, and transport services substantial control of the service conditions matters which affect them, without weakening the unity of the Association, and to make NALGO as strong financially as it is great numerically. It confirmed the Council's policy of seeking improvements in pay and conditions of service through the well-tried methods of joint negotiation (while asking the Council to review their operation). It expressed general approval of both the conduct and results of last year's salary negotiations and, though disappointed that those results had not been more substantial, agreed to leave to the negotiators the decision when to seek further improvements. While helping the negotiators further by rescinding its former decision that the Charter should be regarded as a minimum, upon which branches should be free to negotiate local improvements, it gave them the embarrassing task of seeking higher overtime pay, for a wider range of officers. It showed itself both alert to the dangers—to which we drew attention a year ago—of Communists using the grievances of members for their own propaganda ends, and firm in combating them. It reaffirmed long-standing policies in respect of education, public relations, and equal pay. Above all, it showed, more emphatically, perhaps, than ever before, that the Association's leaders and the rank and file were marching in step, and that the admission to membership of many thousands of officers in services now outside the original local government field had not, as some had feared, weakened NALGO, but rather that this transfusion of fresh blood had given it renewed vitality.

Nevertheless, it was an unsatisfactory Conference. Several of the sessions were dull and tedious. Much time was wasted over trivialities, while many important topics were rushed, dropped, referred without discussion to the N.E.C., or not even reached. Why was this, and what can be done about it?

In the main, the fault lay in the overloading of the agenda. Even after the agenda committee had done its best, by amalgamating similar motions and amendments, to reduce it to manageable proportions, it consisted of 360 items ; and that is more than any gathering can expect to dispose of in four days.

In our view—and we submit it as a basis for discussion—the solution can be found in two measures. The first is that branches must recognise that the purpose of Conference is to determine major policy, not minor detail, and confine their motions to such major policy. It was appropriate, for example, that Conference should consider whether or not it should press for improvements in the General Division scales and higher pay for overtime. But it was not appropriate that it should be expected to decide on 31 motions and amendments on these two topics, specifying, in varying detail, the precise scales, rates, and conditions its spokesmen ought to seek. Such precise specification is not the function of a gathering of 1,400 people, and it is in any event futile. We have based our trade union policy, not on the old practice of a union declaring precise demands and withdrawing its labour if they are not accepted, but rather on the newer and better policy of Whitleyism, under which employers and employees sit around a common table and, after stating their views on a problem, reach an agreed solution by mutual compromise. That is a sound system and it produces results—but not if one side or the other enters negotiations with a fixed and detailed mandate. The function of Conference, therefore, is to lay down the broad lines of the policy it wants, but to leave the details to the negotiators.

The second measure would be to follow the practice of most other big Conferences, including those of the T.U.C. and the political parties, of appointing an agenda committee with power, in consultation with their sponsors, not only to amalgamate similar motions and amendments, but to redraft them in such a way as to confine them to principle rather than detail, and to rearrange the agenda as Conference proceeds in the light of decisions already taken. Had this been done this year, the 360 items on the agenda could have been reduced to 200 or fewer ; the debates on them, confined to clashes of principle, would have been much more interesting, and the resulting decisions, again on the broad lines Conference wished the Association to follow, would have been of greater value.

There is no insuperable obstacle to the adoption of the procedures here suggested. They call merely for a little self-discipline on the part of branches and delegates, and for confidence and trust in those appointed to the agenda committee. Were something on these lines to be adopted, Conference would become a real Parliament of the Association, instructing, informing, and leading. Without such action, it must, as the Association expands, become ever more rushed, tedious, and frustrating.

THE MORE important decisions of Conference are summarised below. For the debates, readers should refer to the page numbered in brackets.

IT RESOLVED TO:

★ Reaffirm its belief in Whitleyism as the best means of establishing and maintaining the status and standards of officers in the public services (521).

★ Approve and adopt, with certain amendments, the N.E.C. proposals for changes in the NALGO structure (526).

★ Increase subscriptions and accumulate a £500,000 reserve fund within ten years (533).

★ Reaffirm NALGO's education policy and recommend members to use the facilities available (544).

★ Pledge the Association to continuous activity until the principle of equal pay for equal work has been applied to all groups of membership (539).

★ Call upon district committees and branches to work for 100 per cent membership (540).

★ Urge branches to guard against Communist attempts to divert members' grievances and demands to their own ends (542).

★ Reaffirm the public relations policy adopted in 1949, and call on branches and districts vigorously to pursue a continuous programme of public relations (524).

★ Take vigorous action to ensure make-up of pay, reinstatement, and safeguarding of promotion prospects of officers called up in mobilisation of service reserves (543).

★ Press for speedy agreement on the amendments (including pensions for widows) which NALGO is seeking in the local government superannuation scheme (525).

★ Ask the Minister of Health to receive a deputation to discuss anomalies arising out of the Local Government (Compensation) Regulations (544).

★ Raise the fee for life membership of the Benevolent & Orphan Fund from £2 2s. to £3 3s., and the minimum monthly subscription to 4d. (539).

IT TOLD THE N.E.C. TO:

★ Take every possible step, in view of the continued rise in living costs, to safeguard the salary standards of members in all services (522).

★ Press the Government to control prices of necessities and reduce the cost of living (524).

★ Take immediate action to secure higher pensions through amendment of the Pensions Increase Acts (544).

★ Review the operation of existing Whitley machinery and expedite the formation of Whitley Councils (521).

★ Ask the staff sides of all National Joint Councils to claim full adoption of equal pay for equal work (539).

★ Initiate an energetic campaign for 100 per cent membership (540).

★ Seek immediate legislation to ensure that reservists and others called up for military service have their service pay made up to civil level and their superannuation rights protected (543).

★ Press for higher overtime payments in all services, for officers earning up to £760 a year (544).

★ Seek, as speedily as possible, implementation of the policy of financially-assisted post-entry training schemes for local authority and public utility services (544).

★ Discuss with other bodies representing non-industrial workers means of obtaining a statutory code, similar to that for factories, to ensure proper working conditions (545).

IT REFERRED TO THE N.E.C.:

★ A demand for action to secure quicker results from the operation of Whitley machinery (521).

★ Suggestions for a national publicity campaign to support the claim for equal pay (539).

★ A recommendation that the Association should declare publicly its opposition to the "closed shop" (541).

★ A proposal that NALGO affiliate with the National Federation of Professional Workers (543).

★ A request for leave with full pay for reservists called up for 15 days' training (544).

★ A demand that provision of pensions for widows or orphans of local government officers should be not less favourable than those in respect of the officers of nationalised boards and hospital committees (525).

★ Calls for the strict observance of the minimum standard for admission of juniors to the local government service and for consideration of this standard in the light of the new general certificate of education (544).

★ Proposals to enable serving local government officers to attend universities (544).

★ Various proposals for improved holiday scales (545).

★ A call for immediate action to persuade local authorities to make provision for staff welfare, including canteen and sports facilities (545).

★ Various proposals for improving General Division salary scales in the local government and national health services (545).

★ Seventy motions and amendments (numbers 134—203 on the agenda) which were not reached (545).

IT REFUSED TO:

★ Make an immediate claim for a further all-round increase in salaries (522).

★ Direct the N.E.C. to submit a revised Charter to the local government N.J.C. forthwith (513).

★ Instruct the staff side to negotiate for acceptance of the local government Charter as a minimum (540).

★ Deplore the method of negotiation adopted by the employers' sides of certain N.J.C.s and the failure of some authorities to give effect to their decisions (521).

★ Demand an investigation and report on measures available to the staff side when employers adopt "an unreasonable attitude or delaying tactics" in negotiations (522).

★ Advise members, in the event of any employing body demanding evidence that they are members of a trade union, to refuse to give the information (542).

★ Instruct the N.E.C. to seek amendment of the Local Government Superannuation Act, 1937, to provide family benefits for widows and dependants of deceased officers and allow allocations to be made by married and unmarried officers without requirement of a medical certificate (525).

★ Ask for additional car mileage allowances in respect of each passenger carried by an officer in the performance of his duties (545).

★ Change the title of the Association (though an assurance was given that the N.E.C. would consider the point during the coming year (538).

President's warning: Must press pay claims so long as prices rise

A CALL FOR concerted action to check the rise in prices, combined with a warning that, until this happened, NALGO must continue to seek higher pay for its members, was the highlight of the presidential address given by E. L. RILEY, at the opening of Conference.

"The present economic trends," he said, "are causing considerable anxiety to our members. Rises in prices of goods and services are all round us, and, as things stand at the moment, it is difficult to see the end.

"There can be little doubt, however, that workers by hand or brain do not stand to gain from conditions where wages and salaries continually chase rising prices. We want stabilisation and then a fall in costs (*hear, hear !*). Every effort should be made by all concerned—government, employers, and employees —to grapple with this problem, the most important facing us during the year ahead.

"We do not want to take part in the scramble, but sheer necessity compels us to say that, until rising costs are halted, we shall continue to press our claims for adequate remuneration for all sections of our membership" (*cheers*).

The Association, Mr. Riley continued, had made such claims during the past year, and he was sure that delegates would join him in expressing appreciation to the Press for the very fair way in which it reported NALGO's case and for the sympathy and editorial support which many newspapers extended to it (*cheers*).

"It is an unusual experience," he said, "for us in the public service to have the Press on our side and the fact that, in general, we enjoyed such an experience during the salaries campaign is, I think, a tribute alike to the justice of our claims and to the skill, vigour, and enthusiasm with which they were stated and explained."

NALGO continued to base its service conditions policies on Whitley machinery. Despite complaints about the slowness of the machinery and the fact that results had often fallen short of members' needs, he was convinced that there was no other method which could resolve their difficulties. It might be that the machinery should be overhauled from time to time (*hear, hear !*) but he challenged critics to suggest other forms of negotiation which would be as productive.

"Frankly," said Mr. Riley, "I cannot see us going back to the old days when each employing authority was approached either by the branch or district officer to do something (*hear, hear !*).

"In some quarters," he continued, "there is an agitation for the withdrawal of the Conditions of Employment and National Arbitration Order—Order 1305. Recourse to arbitration, when negotiating machinery has failed, has been the ultimate protection of employees like ourselves, whose public responsibilities preclude the use of the strike weapon, and we should, therefore, be loath to see it abolished. Should it go, we should most certainly want to see some form of arbitration kept in being as a valuable adjunct to the Whitley machinery."

The outstanding claim affecting a substantial portion of the membership was that of equal pay for equal work. During the past year, notwithstanding Conference's reiteration of support for the claim, the women members, through their national committee, had decided not to press it, in the interests of the negotiations for an all-round increase. All were indebted to them for their restraint, and it might be that, in company with others of a like mind, the Association must now bend its energies towards producing more tangible results (*cheers*).

While NALGO's relations with other trade unions continued, in the main, to be harmonious and productive of good results, it had from time to time had to complain of a lack of understanding, and a failure on the part of some to accept its interest in the newer forms of public service.

"I reaffirm," he declared, amid loud cheers, "our legitimate and long-standing claim to be fully representative of the administrative, professional, technical, clerical, and miscellaneous salaried officers employed in local government, electricity, gas, health, and certain sections of public transport.

"We are willing to co-operate with the great trade union movement to advance and protect the interests of those we serve. We believe and recognise that the new concept of labour relations means that trade unions generally have to accept responsibility for efficient and economical working in trade, industry, and the public services, to an extent that could not be imagined a few years ago.

"We believe that, standing manfully for our rights, we must be ever conscious of our duties. To all these things, and others which are implied, we subscribe without reservation, but because we maintain our traditional public service independence, do not affiliate to this or that body, and remain aloof from political association, it does not follow that we are unmindful of our responsibilities, lacking in sincerity of purpose, or unwilling to help and associate with those who bring to round-table conferences a spirit of good will. We envy none and fear none, but we are quietly conscious, and proud, of our strength, which we shall at all times be prepared to use in a good cause.

"We resent," he continued, "being told that NALGO represents workers who are non-producers (*hear, hear !*). Just as we could not live without the efforts of the miner, transport

worker, agricultural worker, and so on, is it not equally true that not a wheel would turn, not a ship sail, not a factory operate, without those services for which we are responsible?

"We have been warned by successive Chancellors of the Exchequer that there is need for greater productivity if we are to maintain reasonably high standards of living. The last Budget indicated that, for some time to come, the burdens imposed upon us by the need to re-arm would result in a lowering of our standards and that all sections of the community must be expected to make some sacrifice.

"If needs be, we, as responsible members of the community, will carry our fair share of any necessary sacrifice, but we do not expect the public services to be singled out to demonstrate the need for improved efficiency and economy (*hear, hear !*).

"Many of our members perform managerial functions and are not without knowledge of up-to-date methods designed to improve the services and increase efficiency. It is in this direction that we can make our contribution to the economic rehabilitation of our country. The needs of the consumer, be it goods or services, should be ever in our minds. I invite you to think on these things and play your part."

Earlier in his address, the President had referred to the Association's strength, keenness, efficiency and organisation, which had been forcibly brought home to him during his year of office, when he had visited practically every district. Those visits had confirmed his opinion that NALGO's continued progress was largely due to the tremendous amount of voluntary effort so willingly given by thousands of members.

"In many respects," he declared, "we can look on the past year with satisfaction, and to the future with confidence. Today, our nominal membership is 197,000 and our actual membership has almost certainly passed the 200,000 mark (*cheers*), thus continuing the process evident throughout the Association's history whereby it has approximately doubled its membership every ten years.

Call for recruiting drive

"But, although we remain the biggest union of black-coated workers, we are still far from having attained our maximum growth. Let us make the recruitment of those officers who still stand outside our Association one of our major tasks in the year ahead.

"We do not believe in the 'closed shop' in the sense in which the term is used today, as meaning a trade union recruited to 100 per cent membership by the compulsion either of its members or of employers (*cheers*). **NALGO has no use for press-ganged conscripts. But we do want 100 per cent membership of willing and active volunteers.**

"Whilst I detest compulsion, I cannot understand the mentality of the man or woman who, while ready enough to accept and enjoy all the benefits his or her trade union secures, is unwilling to bear his share of the labour involved in gaining those benefits (*hear, hear !*). I am convinced that, with a little effort, we could bring in those officers who still stand outside.

"Let us make that effort this year, so that we shall be able to tell the employers in every field that we speak in the name, and with the backing, of every one of their eligible officers."

At the same time, Mr. Riley made it clear that he saw no virtue in size for its own sake (*hear, hear !*).

"Size may bring strength, but it may also bring weakness from unwieldy structure, lack of co-ordination, division of purpose. We can retain the advantages and avoid the weaknesses only if we adapt our structure to our needs, and work hard to maintain singleness of purpose. You will be considering such adaptation in the course of this Conference and I hope that, whatever your divisions over small things, you will keep constantly before you the need for unity in large."

That growth which had been so marked a feature of the Association as a whole, had been reflected in all its activities. He was particularly glad to see the enormous expansion of the education work and the adoption of the new examinations scheme, through which they had secured what many had sought for years—a qualification, established by an independent examining body and recognised by all local authorities, for the administrative officer. To meet the needs of this new examination system they had continued the reorganisation of the NALGO Correspondence Institute.

"I say without hesitation," he declared, "that the NALGO Correspondence Institute, with its revised courses and top-rank tutors, is the best any officer could find in the country today—as is shown by the fact that, for several years past, its students have had the greatest proportion of successes.

"I hope branches will assist it by advising all student members to support their own Institute. NALGO is providing the best tuition—for members in the electricity and health services as well as in local government—and it now falls to the employers to fulfil their part of the bargain by giving effect to the proposals for financial help recommended by the National Joint Council."

All services flourishing

All the other facilities NALGO offered its members—and no other trade union gave so wide a range of services—were flourishing and expanding. The work of the legal department in legislation, superannuation, and in representing and defending individual members, grew heavier every year. The holiday centres were popular—and populous—as never before, and were places of which the Association could be proud. Knole Lodge was fully occupied throughout the year, and many who had enjoyed its comforts and recuperative atmosphere regarded it as one of the best things NALGO had ever done. After a two-year search, they had now found a suitable building for a northern convalescent home at Lytham St. Annes.

The ancillaries, too, were for the most part flourishing—Logomia had disclosed a surplus of £101,146, allowing for a bonus of 26s. per cent on all with-profits policies, and leaving £31,391 to be carried forward. The Building Society, despite the shortage of cash for investment, had increased its assets during the year by just on £150,000, and advanced £828,000 at the lowest repayment rate charged by any building society in the country.

The Provident Society, notwithstanding that the National Health Scheme had robbed it of some of its appeal, had made surpluses sufficient to grant substantial bonuses under the death and funeral benefit schemes and to introduce a cash benefit of 35s. a week for members of the hospital and nursing home scheme getting free treatment in hospital.

The advent of the welfare state had not diminished calls on the Benevolent and Orphan Fund, which needed an additional £6,000 a year to enable it to continue its great work.

"It calls for your personal interest and support," said Mr. Riley. "Please see to it that what has always been regarded as NALGO's pride shall continue to be so" (*cheers*).

During the year ahead, the N.E.C. intended to examine its relationships with the professional and sectional societies. Events during the past year had stressed the need for unity and co-operation, and they proposed to give an opportunity to their friends in these bodies to express their views and suggestions, so that NALGO might help them to improve their status.

"I am obliged to Conference for the very great honour conferred upon me in electing me the Association's President a year ago," Mr. Riley concluded, amid loud and prolonged cheers, "and I hope that, at the conclusion of this Conference, you will all be satisfied that I have discharged the duties of the office in accordance with the high standards already set for me by my predecessors."

" Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma or a hideous dream.
The genius and the mortal instruments
Are then in council . . ."—Julius Cæsar.

IT WAS IN BRIGHT SUNSHINE, with a light breeze chasing feathery clouds across the Blackpool sky, that delegates assembled for the opening of Conference, their morning eagerness little dimmed by the gaieties of the reception of the previous evening. They found the Empress Ballroom as transformed as their mood: its floor, where a few hours earlier dancing couples had gyrated, now packed with serried ranks of seats to which early comers had already staked a branch or district claim: its funnel-shaped stage housing not an orchestra but the N.E.C. ranged in two "shelves," the upper, flanking the President, being reserved for the Council's spokesmen, the lower housing a somewhat congested rank and file; and the plush-seated gallery filled with interested spectators.

Whether they found the subsequent deliberations between the "genius" on the floor and the "mortal instruments" on the stage—the "hideous dream" that Brutus feared—or whether the things enacted proved as "dreadful" as he predicted, is open to doubt. Nevertheless, the proceedings opened with all the traditional liveliness.

After the organist had stirred sleepy hearts and heads with a string of national airs, and the President had bade the packed assembly "good morning," with the beaming smile that was to be his most characteristic gesture throughout the four days, came the Mayor, Councillor J. HILL, J.P., as bright, breezy, and down-to-earth as his town, to offer delegates a civic welcome.

Then the Mayoress presented the Benevolent & Orphan Fund trophies to the districts making the highest contributions during the year, Conference giving a special cheer to **Metropolitan** whose contribution per head was the highest in the Association's history:

TROPHIES

SIR HOMEWOOD CRAWFORD SHIELD: **Metropolitan** (£7,411—4s. 9.2d. per member); VISCOUNT WAKEFIELD SHIELD: **North Eastern** (£2,435—4s. 8.8d. per member); BRIDLINGTON CUP: **North Western & North Wales** (£7,122—4s. 5.6d. per member).

Contributions from other districts were: **South Wales** £2,035 (4s. 3.6d. per member); **Southern** £2,339 (4s. 1.8d.); **South Eastern** £2,681 (4s. 0.9d.); **Eastern** £2,267 (3s. 11.2d); **South Western** £2,262 (3s. 10.5d.); **Scottish** £2,815 (3s. 7.5d.); **East Midland** £2,503 (3s. 6.9d.); **Yorkshire** £3,297 (3s. 6.9d.); **West Midland** £3,851 (3s. 5.7d.).

R. T. SHEARS, N.E.C., addressing Conference for the last time as chairman of the Benevolent and Orphan Fund Committee, a position he had held for nine years, said that they were proposing to increase the grants to widows and orphans, a decision bound to increase the calls on the Fund, which had last year overspent its income by more than £6,000. Therefore, the effort continued for so many years must not be relaxed. But he left the Fund in good health, in good heart, and in good hands, richly endowed with the voluntary effort of members and the blessings of those who benefited from it.

To the warm acclamation of delegates, the President expressed the thanks of the Association to Mr. Shears for the magnificent work he had put into the Fund. The best memorial they could give him would be for all to give a little more, in money and effort.

Then, after MISS M. W. CURTIN, N.E.C., had thanked the Mayoress for presenting the trophies and for her hospitality at the previous evening's reception, Conference settled down to listen to the President's Address, reported on page 509.

Moving a vote of thanks to the President, H. CHARLTON, **North Western and North Wales** district, said that all in the North West had taken special pride in Mr. Riley's great work for NALGO. The Association had been fortunate in having such a man at its head during the past critical year. He enjoyed a unique popularity amongst all sections of members, the result of his outstanding personal qualities—an irrepressible good humour, which enabled him to get away with anything, astuteness, sound judgment, sincerity, and the natural eloquence and pugnacious courage of Winston Churchill (*cheers*). Those qualities had been exploited to the full by the N.E.C., and even Yorkshiremen would agree that not even Len Hutton was better than Teddy Riley when batting on a sticky wicket.

The prolonged cheers which greeted this motion left no doubt of the unanimous affection felt by delegates for their President. Responding, he said that the best thanks they could give him and the

" None better on a sticky wicket."

Call for reserves to make NALGO Strong

N.E.C. was to continue their loyal and enthusiastic support of the great cause they jointly served.

TREASURER'S ADDRESS

Year's surplus of £13,000

After the re-appointment of the Association's auditors, Conference next turned, with eager interest, to the annual demonstration by the Honorary Treasurer, J. H. ROBINSON, of how to extract both wit and wisdom from the Association's finances. Once again, they were not disappointed for, though more serious than he had sometimes been in the past, Mr. Robinson opened with his customary sparkle.

"The venue of Conference," he said, "changes year by year. We have met in assembly halls, floral halls, pavilions, and w nter gardens, and today, not inappropriately, we are meeting in a building traditionally associated with shuffling along and going round in circles (*laughter*).

"*Shuffling along and going round in circles*"

"I have at previous Conferences drawn the startling deduction that the colour of the cover of the Council's Annual Report is a barometer of NALGO's success and fortunes for the time being. Last year, contemplating the then lot of the local government officer, I prophesied that the report would be bound in black, but it is not. We meet as a victorious army. We have put on one side our publicity, print sheets, pep talks, and persuasion—the panoply with which we arranged our campaign. We have fought for our unassailable 20 per cent which, by the contrariness of mathematics, descends from 10 per cent in the General Division to zero in the fixed income group of which I am one (*laughter*). Therefore, the colour is a little lighter.

"A young lady in my department told me that the colour was fawn. If that is so, it is most appropriate, and I am sure that the N.E.C. will be grateful if you can fawn upon them this year, be it never so little once in a while ! (*laughter*). On the other hand, I imagine that most of you have got over the novelty of the recent increase in your salaries and the consequential effect of 'Pay as you earn,' and when you contemplate what you hoped to get and what you actually got, you may feel that it is correct when our cover shows this year that NALGO has been framed" (*loud laughter*).

B. and O. Fund deficiency

Turning to the Association's finances, Mr. Robinson dealt first with the Benevolent and Orphan Fund—"one of the things where finance does not matter a curse." What really did matter was the need, and whether they were giving proper assistance to that need. The figures showed that the Fund had given £44,600 for the relief of members, and there was a deficiency of £6,575.

"I am glad there is a deficiency," he commented, "because in going about the country and meeting members, I sometimes think that the fact that we at one time had £130,000 was a disadvantage. People thought to themselves, 'Why do they want money ? They have plenty.' That is not the case today, and the Committee feels a little worried about exceeding its annual income, because it may be getting into difficulties. Personally, I do not think that it is."

Members owed a great debt to those who ran the holiday centres (*cheers*). It involved real work and the fact that this year they had shown a surplus of £2,500 gave grounds for congratulation, because the standard was first-rate and "rattling good holidays" could be spent there.

Establishment costs rising

The General Fund account showed that the cost of Headquarters establishment, at £204,000, was rising and, presumably, would continue to rise, due to circumstances which delegates knew well : the increase was about £18,000 in the past two years. The N.E.C. had, as members would wish, met the request of the staff for an increase in basic grades to meet the cost of living (*cheers*).

Parliamentary and legal expenses had increased this year because of the attempts made to try to maintain the compensation clauses under the Local Government Act, 1933. The cost of the salaries campaign as shown in the accounts was £4,500, and the total cost would be about £5,600. "As far as I can see," Mr. Robinson commented, "as one who has some intimate part in work at Headquarters, I think that no efforts were spared, and certainly no money, to make the campaign a success."

Education continued to grow, and the Correspondence Institute had not yet balanced its accounts. The official journal was a good publication, and on the income side there was an improvement in advertising revenue, due to new arrangements made in the past year. The accounts as a whole showed a surplus on the year's working of £13,000, which had been transferred to the General Reserve.

Turning, finally, to the Reserve Fund, Mr. Robinson said :

"We have £86,000 in investments and £11,000 in the bank, but I am not satisfied. Those reserves are too small, and they are subject to all the fortuitous claims and demands which can be made. When I first took office as your Honorary Treasurer, I looked for a certain thing in your accounts, but I did not find it. I looked back to see what had happened and why it was not there. I told you about it, but nothing has brought it.

J. H. Robinson

"You have heard me in recent years deplore the absence of adequate liquid reserves. In a militant trade union—and if we are not that, what are we?—there are two things necessary : the solidarity of the members, and adequate finance to back it up. Solidarity is not a matter for the N.E.C., the President, or the Conference. It is a matter for every individual member to feel that he is working in a common cause. We are approaching our fiftieth year. We have done a lot as NALGO, but we seem to have done everything but the thing which seems to me to be necessary—to secure the reserves with which to back our arguments.

"Therefore, I say to you in conclusion, is it not time that we did a little planning in this direction by way of a change? A large union is not necessarily a strong union. The terms are not synonymous. Please think about it."

CONFERENCE PROCEDURE

Rights of branches upheld

Delegates warmly acclaimed Mr. Robinson's speech and the motion of thanks—"a real, honest, NALGO thank-you" moved by E. G. EUINTON, **Eastern District,** and turned to the first controversial item on the agenda—**Bristol Electricity** branch's motion asking Conference to reaffirm that, when a notice of motion on the Conference agenda was converted by the Agenda Committee into an amendment to another motion on the same subject, then, in the event of the motion being withdrawn, the amendment should be allowed to stand as an original motion.

Moving this, C. R. GIBSON reminded delegates that a similar proposal had been approved by the 1950 Conference, but the N.E.C. had advised that its adoption would cause confusion and make the task of the President in conducting Conference impossible. He did not agree, but argued that, even if adoption of the proposal did involve difficulties, it was more important to preserve the right of every branch submitting a motion for the Conference agenda to have that motion discussed. If the N.E.C.'s contention were accepted, then it would be possible for a branch to submit a motion and be refused permission to discuss it.

Supporting, F. HILSON, **Hyde,** said that NALGO prided itself on giving facilities to members to say what they liked, and how they liked—and branches

"Improve Charter now" demand rejected

should have the right to discuss any item which they considered sufficiently important to place on the agenda. His branch felt that the N.E.C. attitude was merely another move to limit discussion at Conference.

Need to speed-up business

Opposing for the **N.E.C.**, P. H. HARROLD said that, with an agenda of 360 items, there had to be some method of expediting business. The method chosen and approved by Conference was that the agenda committee should go through all the items, amalgamate all motions having the same meaning, and convert all differing motions into amendments. Adoption of the procedure proposed would mean that, should a motion to which there were several amendments be withdrawn, the President would have to have before him and to read out all the original motions from which the amendments had been prepared. Conference would be snowed under with paper and technicalities. The position of branches was safeguarded by the fact that no motion could be withdrawn without the consent of Conference: therefore, any branch which considered that it would suffer because of the withdrawal of a motion had the right to ask Conference to refuse to allow its withdrawal.

But J. BESSERMAN, **Coventry**, challenged this argument, pointing out that the Association's Standing Orders for Conference prohibited any discussion on an application to withdraw a motion or amendment: therefore, it would not be possible for a branch to ask Conference to disagree with the withdrawal of a motion on the ground that its amendment would thereby fall.

The President said that the agenda committee had acted strictly under the powers conferred upon it. They were facing the heaviest agenda in the Association's history, and, in his view, what was needed was a more careful sifting of the items before they reached the agenda. Conference, which should be a policy-forming body, was being overwhelmed with motions and amendments on trivial matters. But he gave the assurance that, should any delegate wish to withdraw a motion which would prejudice other branches, he would direct attention to the fact, and give Conference the opportunity to refuse to allow the motion to be withdrawn, thereby enabling it to debate any amendment.

On a show of hands, the motion was declared lost by 532 to 484. Later in the proceedings, however, the President announced that there had been some confusion over the count and, after the luncheon adjournment, he disclosed, amid cheers, that a check of the figures had shown the motion to have been carried by 484 votes to 476. The President went on to explain that, while the procedure recommended in the motion could not, strictly speaking, take effect at that Conference, he proposed to treat the motion as a directive and proceed accordingly, leaving it to the good sense of delegates and, he hoped, of himself to overcome any difficulty which might arise. Conference accepted this undertaking and, in the event, experienced no difficulty.

ANNUAL REPORT

Plans to revise Charter

Next item was the reception of the Annual Report. This should have been moved by G. LLEWELYN, **Chairman of the Council**, but he had been prevented from coming to Blackpool by the illness of his wife. The President expressed the particular regret of the N.E.C. at his absence, since Mr. Llewelyn had now retired from the service and this would have been his last Conference. He was the "father" of the N.E.C., with a longer period of service than any other member, and delegates warmly applauded the proposal to send him a message of good will.

Finance with a sparkle

In his absence, C. J. NEWMAN, **acting Chairman of the Council**, formally moved the reception of the report, and Conference proceeded to discuss it paragraph by paragraph.

First to be challenged was paragraph 11, dealing with a number of proposals for improving the local government Charter, which the previous year's Conference had referred to the N.E.C. in view of the overriding decision to seek an all-round increase in salaries. In its report, the Council had said that most of the referred items had been incorporated in the proposals it had prepared for a comprehensive revision of the Charter. It intended to submit these to the local government National Joint Council "at an opportune time" and to make them the basis for revisions of the schemes of other national joint councils on which the Association was represented.

Must await right time

Challenging this suggested procedure, E. G. SWAN, **Hertfordshire**, moved that the paragraph be not received and that the N.E.C. be directed to submit its proposals for revision of the Charter to the local government N.J.C. forthwith. The N.E.C., he complained, had not dealt with the various motions referred to it by the Eastbourne Conference in a "militant and practical" way. It claimed that its revised Charter was the complete answer to General Division hardships and difficulties and the deficiencies of the A.P.T. scales: why then, having found the answer, was it content to sit on it? It should submit it to the employers at once: it could do no harm to take all difficulties to the employers at the same time, rather than to deal with each issue separately. They should punch at the employers continuously, and let them know that there was dissatisfaction with service conditions generally.

Opposing for the **N.E.C.**, G. R. ASHTON challenged the suggestion that the Council had not been militant: the salaries campaign had certainly been a militant campaign. In fact, it had achieved most of the objectives set at Eastbourne, and had improved on some, especially in the General Division.

The N.E.C. did not consider that this was the right time to submit its revised Charter. But the staff side would watch the position carefully, and submit the proposals in whole or in part as soon as the prospects were favourable. Despite a further appeal by Mr. Swan, Conference backed the N.E.C., rejecting the motion by a big majority.

In view of this decision, **Hertfordshire** was content formally to move its next motion, calling for the reference back of paragraph 16 of the Report, in which the N.E.C., while approving demands for equal pay and the raising of increments and consequent amalgamation of grades,

How local government salaries claim was won

had opposed proposals for long-service increments, reduction of the number of grades, and abolition of the overlapping of grades, and Conference rejected the motion without discussion.

PAY NEGOTIATIONS

Staff side leader's statement

There followed a series of statements, in supplementation of the Annual Report, detailing the result or present position of the negotiations in the various services with which NALGO is concerned on its claim for a 20 per cent increase in salaries. The first of these, on the local government claim, was made by E. A. S. YOUNG, leader of the local government staff side.

A year ago, Mr. Young reminded delegates, Conference instructed the N.E.C. "immediately to initiate a campaign with a view to achieving an all-round general increase in salaries, and to take such other measures as are necessary to achieve such object." As the Report made clear, the Council took the promptest steps to plan and inaugurate a publicity campaign, in advance of the submission of a claim to the National Joint Council. Whatever views might be held on the value or effect of the campaign, there could be no question that it was well planned and most efficiently conducted, thanks to the whole-hearted efforts of all who took part in it.

Conference did not specify the form or the measure of the claim, and the N.E.C., after careful consideration, decided that it should be for a uniform increase of 20 per cent on the existing scales.

Why target was fixed

"We realised to the full," Mr Young explained, "the arguments which could be advanced, whether from within the service, or by the employers, against a claim of this scope, based on the principle of a uniform percentage. But we chose it as our target for reasons which seemed to us compelling and conclusive. First, the cost-of-living index stood at about 18 per cent above the level of 1946, when the Charter was introduced. Secondly, whilst it might be utopian to expect any body of employers, or any arbitration tribunal, to award such a percentage on the higher salaries in any claim based mainly upon the increase in the cost of living, we desired to preserve as much ground for argument as possible in bringing the higher-paid grades into the picture and in resisting any tendency to wipe out differentials.

"The policy of the Council was justified in the event. We may not have achieved the 20 per cent—though we have gone very close to it at some levels; we may not have secured for those on the highest ranges of the A.P.T. scales what we believe was justly their due; but we could not have achieved so much had our initial strategy been different, and I believe we would have achieved much less."

The claim, said Mr. Young, was submitted to the N.J.C. on January 17—the earliest date on which it could have been submitted after the climax of the campaign for which Conference had asked—and a copy of the formal claim was circulated to branches. That document was not, of course, the complete case: it represented the "pleadings," leaving the evidence and arguments to be developed at length at the N.J.C. meeting.

In their reply, the employers promised to consider the claim speedily. They did, however, raise one crucial issue. Pointing out that the NALGO Conference had resolved that the Charter should be regarded as a minimum, they asked the significance of this resolution, saying that they did not see how they could be asked to negotiate upon a national claim, on a national basis, if they were to be told,

E. A. S. Young

in another breath, that there would not be a national basis to any settlement. They pointed out, further, that the Charter had been negotiated as a national standard, and not as a national minimum, and asked how it was to be regarded in the negotiations. To this, the staff side could give only one reply. It had to recognise that the Charter had in fact been negotiated as a standard and that it must continue to be so regarded until both sides of the N.J.C. decided otherwise. The employers required assurances which could be placed on record. These were given.

Employers' reply

At a meeting of the executive committee of the N.J.C. on March 12, the employers said emphatically that they could not countenance the claim for a uniform increase of 20 per cent, but would be prepared to consider the case from two aspects:

1. A measure of compensation, related to an appropriate block of income, for the increase in the cost of living; and
2. A definite betterment of the General Division.

The employers then submitted counter-proposals. Those for the General Division incorporated a shortening of the scale, which gave satisfaction to the staff side, but the proposals did not go so far as those which were subsequently agreed. The staff side obtained improvements, and eventually a point was reached when it had to recognise that the offer was such, when considered in relation to rates of pay in other spheres settled under recent arbitration awards, as the staff side could not hope to better by any available means.

A disappointing offer

On the other hand, the employers' proposals for levels above the General Division were most disappointing: a flat £30 at some points and £35 at others, up to Grade Va, tapering down between Grades Va and VIII, to £20, and nothing at all in Grades IX and X. Pressed for their reasons, the employers pointed out that, at these levels, they could deal with the claim only on a cost-of-living basis. The staff side had gone to arbitration in 1948, when an independent tribunal had settled rates which must be deemed appropriate at that time. Therefore, they must take account, not of the increase in the cost of living since 1946, but of the increase since the arbitration in 1948.

"We knew that we should have to reckon with that factor," said Mr. Young, "but we pointed out that, even so, the increase must be reckoned at 14 to 15 per cent, and that the sums proposed by the employers fell far short, even on that calculation.

"In regard to the block of income which the employers were prepared to regard as sustaining the impact of the essentials in the cost of living, it appeared that they were striking a level not much higher than the maximum of the General Division. That was why they felt that the amount should be tapered off above that level.

"In regard to Grades IX and X, the employers said that they had evidence to show that, when these additional grades were agreed in 1948, the officers concerned received substantial betterment—a betterment which had accrued to them, as distinct from the levels below, since 1946. Besides that, they said that to award any sums to Grade X would carry the figures above the N.J.C.'s constitutional ceiling, and that they were not prepared to risk any action which would be *ultra vires*.

Vigorous Reaction

"The staff side reacted to these arguments vigorously. We pointed out, not only that the percentage being taken by the employers was inadequate, but that the block of income which they had taken as affected by increases in the essential costs of living was much too low. We countered the argument as to Grades IX and X by pointing out that, although these grades were established some time after the Charter, the intention was to relate them to those already existing under the original Charter, and the inference was, therefore, that they were established upon the general levels of 1946.

"Many hours of protracted argument and negotiation eventually brought some slight improvement in the employers' offer. They were prepared to increase the figure to £40 up to the level of Grade III and the first three years of Grade IV, but were not prepared to go any further. They were not prepared to carry this sum through to the higher grades, and they remained obdurate in their attitude to Grades IX and X."

At this point, Mr. Young continued.

the negotiators felt that the position should be laid in confidence before the National Executive Council and, at a special meeting on March 17, gave it a full account of the negotiations and an appreciation of the position and prospects. The Council confirmed the view of the staff side that the position reached on the General Division was acceptable, but that the employers' proposals above that level were unacceptable, and authorised a further attempt at settlement by negotiation.

This decision, he proceeded, was based on the view that bleak as the prospects seemed, the employers as a whole had not said their last word, and that careful strategy and argument might make some impact even upon the unsympathetic element on the employers' side. Accordingly, all the strategy, effort, and argument of the negotiators was directed to the levels above General Division.

Staff side's hard fight

At a further meeting of the executive committee on April 12, the staff side presented a carefully-prepared memorandum. In this it argued that the employers' measure of the block of income affected by increases in the essential elements of living costs was entirely inadequate; demonstrated the extent to which differentials would be impaired by the employers' proposals; pointed out the effect of their proposals upon recruitment and the retention of trained staff; urged the discouraging effect of the proposals on officers seeking qualifications, and intending to make a settled career in the service; showed that, as a result of graduated income-tax, those on the higher levels were, through subsidised food costs and social services, making a contribution from their higher pay to the living standards of lower-paid officers; and stressed and elaborated the arguments against the proposals to give nothing at all to Grades IX and X.

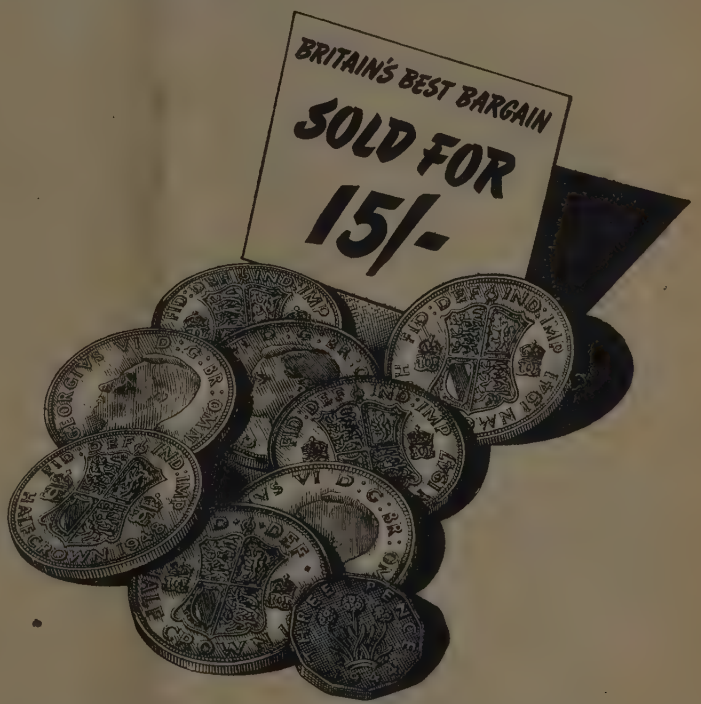
"Your negotiators," Mr. Young declared, "have no cause to be ashamed of the efforts they put forward at that juncture (*hear, hear!*). What is more, these efforts brought results which many thought it impossible to achieve, after our experience at the earlier meeting of the executive committee.

"We held what we had secured in the General Division. After a day of the most difficult negotiation, we secured the application of a flat rate increase of £50 as against the £30, £35, £20 or so originally offered up to the level of Grade VIII. We moved the employers from their original attitude in regard to Grades IX and X and secured something for them; though we made it clear that we did not accept the position arrived at as just to those layers of the service, and would take every opportunity to raise the matter again. And, finally, while the employers could not regard our oft-repeated claim for an improvement in London 'weighting' as part of the present negotiations (though we had stressed it), we secured an undertaking that the N.J.C. would consider a renewed application for an improvement in London 'weighting' after the termination of the present negotiations.

"At the end of the day, we had secured the negotiated settlement subsequently reported, and an agreement to translate its general terms into corresponding benefits for the Miscellaneous classes and such special sections as the transport staffs and the superintendents and matrons of children's homes (*cheers*).

"But the agreement was still subject to the confirmation of the National Joint Council. That leads me to pass a few remarks about the attitude of some branches on reports on the negotiations as they proceeded. We gave careful attention to this matter throughout, and you have had, and had promptly, anything that the General Secretary was authorised to communicate, and nothing more. It must be obvious that there was no juncture when we could have told you more, and there was at least one juncture—the interval between the second meeting of the executive committee and the ensuing meeting of the National Joint Council—when to have communicated the position we had reached might seriously have prejudiced your interests, in the light of what we knew about the attitude of some employing authorities. Not only did the staff side agree with the employers, but your Council agreed, *in your interests*, that we could not make a public forum of these negotiations, but should observe the strictest confidence until a decision was reached.

"When press reports appeared, they were not authorised by your Council. We do not know whence they emanated, and it is the tradition of the newspaper world not to disclose the sources of its information. I can only say that, if any of these reports leaked from Association sources, and I cannot believe that they did, they were,



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In the event, the N.J.C. confirmed the recommendations of the executive committee at a meeting on April 24, and made them retrospective to April 1, the beginning of the local government financial year, and the date at which normal salary adjustments are made. The staff side urged that the award should be made retrospective to January 1, but the employers refused to adopt any earlier date than April 1. Since the claim was not presented until January 17, he did not think this attitude unreasonable. Local authorities had a rooted objection to finding amounts not covered in estimates, and were not prepared to go to fine limits in adjusting their financial procedure to the time-tables of a variety of negotiating bodies.

"Machine acted with speed"

Drawing attention to "the commendably short interval" between the presentation of the claim on January 17 and its settlement on April 24, with retrospective effect to April 1, Mr. Young said:

"I think that the Whitley machine for the local government service has, on this occasion at any rate, acted with speed; and I challenge anyone to cite any instance of negotiations in any other field, whether governed by Whitley machinery or by some other means, where the interval between the submission of a claim and its settlement has been shorter, in negotiations of anything like comparable magnitude and complexity."

Commenting on the award from the point of view of the staff side and the N.E.C., he suggested that there was no ground for complaint in respect of the General Division. The improvement in the figures and, in particular, the shortening of the scale, had gone far to realise objectives they had had in mind for some time past, and covered many of the targets set by notices of motion to Conference, including the present one. They compared favourably with the rates for similar levels in comparable spheres of employment, including those produced by recent agreements or arbitrations. This was the case, for example, if the award was compared with the rates obtained by the Civil Service in its recent arbitration, even after taking account of the fact that Civil Service salaries are not subject to deduction for superannuation. The percentage increases throughout the General Division averaged around 14 or 15 per cent, and at certain levels they were not far short of 20 per cent. They had not achieved equal pay for women either in the General or Clerical Divisions, but there the situation was still determined by government policy, and both sides of the N.J.C. regarded equal pay as a separate issue which they were entitled to raise at any time in the light of events outside the service.

"As regards the levels above the General Division and up to and including Grade VIII," he commented, "it is seldom, if ever, in salary or wage negotiations of any kind that amounts awarded for cost of living increases keep pace entirely with the index, whether the settlements be by negotiation or by arbitration. In considering what has been achieved, we must also acknowledge that the employers raised a cogent argument, and one which would certainly have availed them in arbitration, in pointing out that we must reckon from the last arbitration. That arbitration gave the official stamp to the rates it awarded as *just rates at that time.* This is one of the effects of arbitration to which those who seem disposed, so lightheartedly, to resort to it on all occasions, should bear in mind. The settlement at these levels fell short of our hopes, but not enough to risk a final breakdown.

D. Galbraith

"Our greatest disappointment was in regard to Grades IX and X. I can assure our colleagues in these grades that no efforts were spared on their behalf. There were two major difficulties before us. First, the employers' contention that these grades had already had a substantial betterment in the process of implementing the two new grades in 1948. I would be deceiving you if I did not say that, having collected evidence ourselves, we found that there was, in some measure, factual support for the employers' contention. Whatever the measure of that betterment was, it is now increased by the limited improvement we finally secured; but we still feel, and have in fact said to the employers, that we do not think justice has been done to officers in these grades.

"The other difficulty was the fact that the National Joint Council's 'ceiling' is £1,000 per annum, and the employers were not prepared to take the risk—and there *was* a risk—of having any increases which brought the scales beyond £1,000 a year challenged on the grounds that they were *ultra vires.* This position could only have been remedied by alterations in the constitution of the National Joint Council, which would have involved reference to, and the consent of, the local authority associations, and the staff organisations. We could not, in fairness, have jeopardised a settlement for so many by breaking off for the months of procedure necessary to secure such a constitutional revision. We have told the employers that we intend to take the earliest opportunity of renewing our efforts on behalf of Grades IX and X, and I think that the employers—or some of them—understand our attitude, and may, on further examination, not seek to place obstacles in our way. Negotiations now in process between representatives of the N.J.C. and of Committee 'B' for officers above the level of £1,000 a year may present an early opportunity to raise this question again. While, therefore, we can understand the feelings of officers in these grades, we ask them to leave the issue still with us; our efforts will be continued.

"If it would be wrong to disregard particular aspects of the settlement in looking at it as a whole, it would be equally wrong not to appreciate the all-round achievement in looking at particular aspects. We have carefully studied the all-round achievement, and compared it with what other organisations have achieved, and we boldly claim that there is no one else who has done better, on an all-round view. If this claim seems a little too bold when one thinks of the London County Council settlement, we would point out that it may be too soon to judge, until we see what follows from the consideration of London 'weighting' which is already on the N.J.C.'s agenda.

"Nothing more from arbitration"

"We feel," Mr. Young concluded, "that we have extracted the utmost from negotiation. We would add that a negotiated settlement is, in our view, worth something in itself. We still face rising prices and a period of uncertainty. We are in a position where we may have to go to the employers again—quite soon, and probably several times in the course of the next year or two (*hear, hear!*). Arbitration at this juncture would have stiffened their attitude—as it did on the last occasion—and created difficulties of its own, some of them of the kind which left the National Executive Council with an unenviable heritage from the last arbitration.

"In any event, we must say, and say quite categorically, that in the final stage of the negotiations we arrived at the conclusion that nothing was to be gained by arbitration. That is still our verdict, as we review what we have accomplished now that the settlement is made. We are advised by officers whose knowledge of the potentialities and prospects of arbitration is incomparable; and in their informed and decided view, arbitration could have brought nothing more than what was achieved, and might, if we had resorted to it before our final efforts, have brought something appreciably less."

The keen attention with which this long statement was heard, and the prolonged applause with which it was acclaimed, left no doubt that delegates as a whole appreciated both the arduous labours of the negotiators and the measure of success they had achieved.

SCOTTISH CLAIM

Negotiators' special difficulties

Next, D. GALBRAITH presented a report on the Scottish claim. In the main, he said, negotiations in the Scottish Joint Industrial Council had followed the same pattern as those in England. But, as so often happened, it was necessary for policy to be trimmed to suit the peculiar conditions in Scotland. The first difficulty was that, unlike England, NALGO in Scotland did not hold a majority of seats on the staff side, and it was therefore necessary for the Association's representatives to win the co-operation and support of the other trade unions represented. Those unions did not approve the claim

Scottish, electricity, and gas service claims

for an all-round increase of 20 per cent and a compromise had to be reached. The fact that that compromise satisfied the main principles of Association policy was a measure of the degree of helpful co-operation displayed by the other unions and a tribute to the persuasive powers of the NALGO members.

The second difficulty arose out of the decision of the J.I.C., reached before Conference decided on the claim, to abolish the "grouping" system from the beginning of the financial year 1951. A third difficulty was presented by the disparity between General Division scales in Scotland and in England. Since abolition of grouping and the removal of the General Division disparity would require increases ranging from £10 to £55, regardless of the claim, these two issues presented a formidable problem to the staff side.

Result "highly satisfactory"

The claim was submitted to the J.I.C. on December 15 and the "pleadings" presented on February 16. The Scottish employers used much the same arguments as those in England, and they, too, drew attention to the Conference resolution that the Charter should be regarded as the minimum. Generally, however, the claim was received sympathetically. It was apparent that there had been fairly close co-operation between the Scottish and English employers, and at a meeting of the executive committee on March 21, the Scottish employers made an offer similar to that which had been made by their English counterparts, except that the General Division maximum remained at

L. W. G. Hetherington

32 years and the increases in the A.P.T. division were more generous than those offered in England.

Negotiations were continued, the staff side aiming, as far as possible, to keep in step with the English staff side, with which there was a complete exchange of information.

At a final meeting of the J.I.C., the employers agreed to improvements for Higher Division I and offered a flat-rate increase of £40 for A.P.T. Grades I—IV and £50 for Grades V—VIII. Since it was evident that this was as far as they would go, the offer was accepted.

Commenting on the result, Mr. Galbraith said that the General Division increases were similar to those obtained in England, plus the abolition of grouping and removal of approximately 60 per cent of the former disparity between the Scottish and English scales. But they had to make a concession on the method of abolishing grouping, agreeing to half the increase immediately, and the balance from the start of the financial year, 1952.

The award provided increases ranging from £20 to £95 for men and from £20 to £52 for women in the General Division, and from £35 to £75 for men and from £28 to £57 for women in the Higher Divisions. It had been approved by an overwhelming majority of the Scottish District Committee and, in general, could be regarded as highly satisfactory: indeed, it meant that, for the first time, local government salaries in Scotland were near parity with those in England.

Once again, loud cheers endorsed this claim and registered the satisfaction of Conference with the achievement of the Scottish negotiators.

Delicate stage in electricity

The next statement, on the negotiations for electricity staffs, by L. W. G. HETHERINGTON, was less informative because, as Mr. Hetherington explained, the negotiations there had not been concluded and had reached the same delicate stage as the local government negotiations a few weeks earlier.

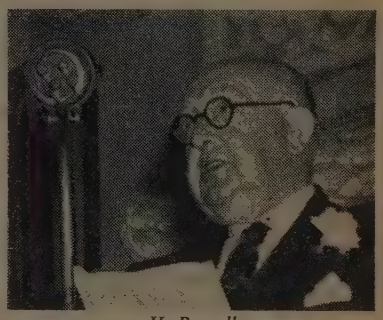
The intention to submit a claim for an increase of "not less than 20 per cent," he said, was reported to the Electricity Supply Industry National Joint Council (Administrative and Clerical Grades) on March 13, and the formal claim was discussed by the negotiating committee on April 27 and again on May 31. At the latter meeting, certain general proposals were discussed and a sub-committee was appointed to examine details.

While the staff side fully appreciated the urgency of the matter and was disappointed that it had not yet been possible to reach a settlement, members must realise that the Electricity Boards also had before them claims on behalf of technical and manual employees, which might involve them in additional expenditure of several million pounds a year. It was understandable, therefore, that they needed time to consider all the claims carefully.

Conference recognised this position and, by its applause, showed that it was fully behind the negotiators.

Gas settlement agreed

Making a statement about the negotiations for gas staffs, H. RUSSELL, N.E.C. said that, when it considered the Conference instruction on October 24, the National Consultative Committee for the gas industry endorsed the recommendation of the salaries campaign sub-committee that the publicity campaign should be confined in the first place to the local government service and that any gains secured there should be used to improve conditions in other services. The Committee also agreed that, since the recently negotiated salary scales for gas staffs had not been fully implemented, it would be inopportune to claim an all-round increase at that time.



H. Russell

On February 9, the staff side agreed to submit a claim for a 20 per cent increase to the next meeting of the N.J.C., and referred the preparation of the case to a sub-committee.

Notice of the claim was given at a meeting of the N.J.C. on March 1, and the formal "pleadings," in the preparation of which NALGO officers played a major part, were sent to the employers on March 14. These pointed out that the effect of the national scales operative from April 1, 1950, had not been to increase salaries, but merely to introduce a common standard; most of the officers had been placed in the grades nearest their former salaries. The new scales followed the pattern of the local government Charter, negotiated in 1945, and were no longer adequate to meet the needs of 1951. Moreover, when they were negotiated in 1950, the policy of wage restraint had been accepted, but the steeply rising cost of living had since compelled modification of that policy.

In their reply, made at a meeting of the N.J.C. on April 5, the employers contended that the unions had not established a case for a 20 per cent all round increase; that the N.J.C. must deal with any application on its merits, and could not be governed by the decisions of other bodies; and that the unions had accepted the agreement of June, 1950, as reasonable at that time. They further made it clear that they would not negotiate on a percentage basis.

They did, however, make a counter-offer to delete the lowest step in each grade, to increase the maximum of each grade by the amount of its maximum increment, and to advance each officer

Health service claims going to arbitration

by one increment—with the proviso that higher salaries paid as a "better condition" should merge in this increase.

The staff side unanimously rejected this offer but, realising that it would be necessary to abandon the percentage basis, sought an adjournment to consider the position.

During this adjournment, they prepared counter-proposals to give a flat-rate increase on all salaries. These were submitted to the employers on May 8. This was a long meeting, in the course of which several offers and counter offers were considered. Finally, realising that the employers would concede no more, the staff side agreed to a settlement providing increases of £20 for ages 16 to 20 inclusive; £25 for ages 21 and 22; £30 for age 23; and £35 for ages 24 to 25; £40 on clerical grades B., C., and D.; £20 for grade A.P.T. 1; £25 on the first two steps of grades A.P.T. 2, 3, and 4, with £30 on the next three steps and £40 on the remaining steps of these grades; £40 on A.P.T. 5 and 6; and £50 on A.P.T. 7 to 12. This agreement carried the proviso that the additions should apply to all protected salaries paid as a "better condition."

"Most we could get"

No attempt was made by the staff side to secure equal pay, the employers having assured the negotiators that, as a nationalised service, they would deal with this issue as soon as the Government gave a lead, but not before: therefore, women would get 80 per cent of the increases awarded. Though the staff side made strenuous efforts to make the increase effective from April 1, the employers were adamant in refusing to agree a date earlier than June 1.

"Regarding the settlement as a whole," Mr. Russell commented, "while I do not claim it to be entirely satisfactory, I am certain that your negotiators did a good job. It must be remembered that the new scales were agreed only in June, 1950, and, when the claim was submitted, three area boards were only just completing their regradings. We are satisfied that what has been obtained is the most we could get by negotiation, and that no means were available which would have secured more.

"An outstanding feature of the agreement is the payment of the increases on protected salaries. Some may say this is a departure from the principle of grading the post and not the employee; but the position in the gas industry at present justifies the staff side attitude on this point. Since vesting day, national scales have been introduced, but there are twelve area boards, each an autonomous body covering a large number of undertakings, applying them. There are also undertakings in which no scales of any kind were in operation before April, 1950. The posts in these undertakings have now been graded, and in many cases have been placed in a scale the maximum of which is £30 or £40 less than the salary being paid to the present holder, who possibly has not received an increase for several years, and who realises that he has reached the maximum he can expect for his job. But his cost of living has increased and he naturally feels that he should receive something to maintain his established standard. It is, I feel, an achievement to have secured this.

"The negotiations were carried through with commendable speed. The claim was submitted on March 14, came before a joint meeting on April 5, and settlement was reached on May 8. No one can say there has been undue delay."

Problem of Intermediate grades

In addition to the officers covered by the N.J.C., Mr. Russell continued, there were in the gas industry a number of Intermediate grade employees whose conditions were determined by a National Joint Standing Committee, upon which the Gas Council, the N.J.C. for gas staffs, and the N.J.I.C. for the manual workers, were equally represented. The staff side of this body agreed to seek an increase for these grades, but decided to await the award in respect of officers before making a claim. As soon as the award had been agreed, the employers were notified that a claim for an all-round increase would be submitted at the meeting of the Standing Committee on June 1.

The claim was for a similar amount to that awarded to officers on comparable scales. Whilst the employers agreed that an increase was justified, they refused to grant the same amount as for officers, pointing out that the manual workers had been awarded only £16 on April 1, and arguing that many intermediate grade posts were closely allied to manual jobs, and were really "manual plus." They offered £20 on grades one to five, and £30 on grades six to eleven inclusive.

The staff side, on the other hand, contended that these posts should be regarded as "staff minus," and that therefore the award should be allied more closely to that for staff than to that for manual workers. Pressed to increase their offer, the employers made a final offer of £25 for grades one to five, and £35 for grades six to eleven. After consideration of all the circumstances, including the fact that the agreement for these grades was completed in November, 1950, the staff side offered to settle at £30 on grades one to five, and £35 on grades six to eleven, and this the employers accepted, also agreeing that the settlement should date from April 29—the beginning of a pay week, midway between April 1, the date of the manual workers' increase, and June 1, that of the staffs' increase. This award would apply to all Intermediate grade employees, including those receiving a protected rate of pay as a "better condition."

A. Anderton

Once again, Conference received the statement with acclamation.

HEALTH SERVICE DEADLOCK

Employers' offer rejected

A. ANDERTON, N.E.C., then made a statement on the negotiations in the national health service. Here, he said, the NALGO representatives invited the staff sides of the Administrative and Clerical, Nurses and Midwives, Professional and Technical Staffs "A," and Professional and Technical Staffs "B" Councils in the health service Whitley machinery, on August 15, to give formal notification of their intention to apply for all-round salary increases. The Association, he reminded Conference, was in a minority on each of these staff sides.

The staff side of the Administrative and Clerical Staffs' Council decided, on December 12, to submit a claim for an increase of 20 per cent in all existing scales and London "weighting" in respect of A.P.T. grades and senior officers of hospital management committees, boards of governors, and regional hospital boards. The management side replied with a counter-proposal to replace the General, Clerical, Higher Clerical, Miscellaneous and A.P.T. divisions and to review the whole grading structure, up to and including the A.P.T. division. In view of government policy, it rejected the full application of equal pay.

The staff side, while favourably disposed to a recasting of the grading structure, objected that the proposed new scales were inadequate, that equal pay for men and women had not been conceded, and that it could not agree to suspend negotiations and regrade designated posts without an understanding that, whatever agreements were ultimately reached, the revised salaries should apply from the date fixed for other staffs.

It was agreed to refer the proposals to a negotiating committee of nine, including three NALGO representatives. This committee met on April 17 and 28, and the management side improved on its original proposals, but no agreement was reached. At a meeting of the full Council on May 16, the management side made a final offer, but this the staff side refused to accept. It insisted that the first grade should be not less favourable than the local government General Division and that assimilation increases for the

Welcome to nurses: transport staffs' plight

higher grades should be not less than those given to similar grades in local government. Since the management side would not agree, negotiations broke down and the staff side reported a trade dispute. The management side, in turn, reported a trade dispute on the ground that the staff side had rejected its proposals for a new salary structure. Although NALGO held only six out of 21 seats on the staff side, it had unanimously invited J. E. N. DAVIS, the Association's Chief Organisation Officer, to prepare and submit the case to the Tribunal—a great tribute to NALGO and Mr. Davis (*cheers*). Negotiations on the higher grades would be resumed when the result of the above arbitration was known.

The Nurses' and Midwives' Council, Mr. Anderton continued, had for the past two years been reviewing the salary scales recommended by the Rushcliffe Committee. Until this review was completed, it was considered impracticable to seek an increase on recently negotiated scales.

In the Professional and Technical Staffs "A" Council, the staff side claimed a £50 all-round increase in the scales negotiated by the former Joint Negotiating Committee for hospital staffs. The management side made a counter-offer, but, here again, the issue had gone to arbitration. Negotiations had also broken down on the staff side proposals for physicists, bio-chemists, and medical laboratory technicians, and disputes had been reported. Proposals for an increase for hospital engineers were being prepared.

After Conference had received this statement also, E. A. S. YOUNG, **N.E.C.,** told S. SHALLICE, **Manchester,** that nothing had been agreed with regard to the position of local government officers with protected salaries.

ADMISSION OF NURSES

N.E.C. decision reversed

Conference warmly cheered an interjection by the President, expressing, on behalf of delegates, its best wishes to the Association's representatives in carrying out these difficult negotiations and assuring them of the full backing and support of members. Delegates turned next to a **Birmingham Regional Hospital Board** motion calling for the rejection of paragraphs 30 and 31 of the Report, in which the N.E.C. recorded its decision to restrict recruitment of nurses to those in local authority employment and to nurses above the rank of ward sister in the national health service.

Moving the motion, T. H. WATERHOUSE complained that the decision had been reached without reference to the Health Service Consultative Committee which, as soon as it heard of it, passed a resolution opposing it.

The exclusion from membership of all save the higher grades of hospital nurses, Mr. Waterhouse continued, represented a complete reversal of the previous policy of the Association, which had taken a leading part in the work of the Rushcliffe Committee. The fear expressed in paragraph 31 that, were recruitment to be continued, the Association might be swamped by an influx of 120,000 nurses, was an artificial bogy, since nurses generally were not trade union minded, and there was a great wastage in the profession by marriage and nurses leaving.

NALGO, he maintained, was the proper organisation for nurses, who were professional people and should not be classed with manual workers.

A. K. HADFIELD, **N.E. Essex Hospital Board,** seconding, suggested that other

A. K. Hadfield *Miss M. W. Curtin*

professional staffs in the hospital service were beginning to wonder whether they were next on the list to be dropped. Credence was being given to a whispering campaign that NALGO was more concerned with local government than with health staffs.

MISS D. HUMPHREYS, **Leeds,** supported, on the ground that the N.E.C. statement that in the past it had proved impossible to maintain a stable membership of nurses was irrelevant and inapplicable, while the further statement that a big influx of nurses would profoundly affect the character and purpose of the Association was sheer nonsense (*cheers*). It was difficult to keep nurses in membership in the past simply because so many moved from municipal hospitals, where they were eligible for membership, to voluntary hospitals, where they were not eligible. But that did not apply under the national health service.

Replying for the N.E.C., H. R. JONES urged that the Association must have some regard to the extent to which it spread its wings. From his own observations, hospital nurses who were members attached more importance to their professional organisation than they did to NALGO. Although the Health Service Consultative Committee had disagreed with the N.E.C. decision, it was obviously not enthusiastic, since, on March 31, it endorsed the view of the South Western District Consultative Committee that it was unlikely that the Association could ever recruit the majority of nurses and that no special propaganda should be undertaken to recruit them.

MISS M. CURTIN, **N.E.C.,** speaking from the floor and in support of the motion, said that the issue was serious, not only for health service staffs, but for all nationalised services. "If you allow one committee of the N.E.C. to decide that any section shall not be included, where are we heading?" she asked. Sooner or later, many of the members in other nationalised services would find that NALGO could not, or would not, cater for them.

"I ask you to accept us," Miss Curtin concluded, amid loud cheers. "We shall work for you; you cannot do without us, and we need you."

Conference clearly agreed, adopting the motion by a substantial majority, and then adjourned until Wednesday, having in the first of its four days got halfway through item 13 of an agenda of 360 items.

TRANSPORT PROBLEM

Recognition refused

Wednesday dawned cool and fresh, though skies were grey.

First to the microphone came R. G. RIDDELL, **Wandsworth,** with an appeal for more district staff and, particularly, for a full-time health officer in every district where the concentration of hospital and health staffs warranted it. But he failed to find a seconder.

Conference showed more interest in the next motion, by W. G. BRAY, **Bristol Tramways,** for reference back of paragraph 79, recording that, in the absence of any national negotiating machinery for the as yet un-nationalised road passenger transport service, NALGO had continued to recruit members, and had negotiated separate agreements with individual companies.

This, though factual, gave no picture of the situation within the industry, Mr. Bray complained. One road passenger transport group—the Tillings Group—had evolved, in association with certain unions, a technique which enabled it not only to appoint employers' representatives, but also to select very carefully the staff representatives when salaries or service conditions were considered. The technique was simple: it was to recognise the union which appeared to make the least costly demands, irrespective of the number of staff it represented.

In the Crosville case, for example, the employers signed an agreement with the Transport and General Workers' Union, ignoring the representations of NALGO, which represented 98 per cent of the staff.

In Bristol there was a similar case, where NALGO also had a substantial majority. NALGO could not uphold the vital principles of collective bargaining unless there was a radical strengthening of the leadership and of the determination of those leaders.

In road haulage, a majority of the potential staff had been members of NALGO, but the negotiators had been unable to secure representation, and a union representing the minority was allowed to take over.

Supporting, S. SHALLICE, Manchester, speaking as a local government officer in the transport industry, saw another difficulty. If the 1947 Act, which provided for the creation of area boards, were implemented, it would necessitate the establishment of national joint consultative and negotiating machinery. The Transport and General Workers' Union would take part in that machinery, and its representation would, of course, be in proportion to its membership. It was essential, therefore, in the interests of municipal officers in the transport industry, that their brothers in the private enterprise part of the industry should be brought into NALGO.

S. Shallice

Arbitration disappointment

For the N.E.C., MISS F. POLE denied that the Council had taken no positive steps on behalf of its transport members. They had applied to a number of companies for salary scales and conditions of service, and had succeeded with some. With others they had not been successful for a variety of reasons. At the request of members in the branches concerned, they had taken trade disputes to the National Arbitration Tribunal. The results of two important cases—Crosville and the Midland Red—brought out certain difficulties which, whilst not insuperable, called for great patience and loyalty from members.

In the Midland Red case, the company resisted the Association's claim, saying that, whilst they might be prepared to negotiate for weekly-paid staff, they would not negotiate for salaried staff. When it was made plain that there had been no negotiations at all, the hearing was adjourned for two months to allow negotiations on the weekly-paid staff. It was clearly understood that if, subsequently, the company persisted in its attitude towards the salaried staff, NALGO would report a further trade dispute. Indeed, the chairman of the National Arbitration Tribunal stated that any award made would apply to both weekly-paid and salaried staffs.

The result of the Crosville case was less satisfactory. The company had relied on an award of January, 1948, in another Tillings concern, the Bristol Tramways and Carriage Company. The plea of the companies in both cases was similar—that there was already in existence an agreement governing salaries and working conditions between the company and the T. & G.W.U.

"N.E.C. behind us—but too far!"

In the Bristol case, the agreement was signed on the day the written case of the company was submitted to the Tribunal. In the Crosville case, NALGO contended that it had the majority of the staff in membership, and that members regarded the salary scales negotiated by another union representing a small minority as inadequate and unsatisfactory. An extraordinary feature of the hearing was that Mr. C. E. Ackroyd, the national secretary of the administrative, clerical and supervisory group of the T. & G.W.U., was present with the company representatives and, in answer to a question, said that, in his opinion, the salaries were satisfactory.

Those cases showed that the solution to the difficulties in the transport section did not lie in arbitration. Two of the cases were lost; the result of the third was problematical. It must not be forgotten that the award of the National Arbitration Tribunal was legally binding and once it had been given no further steps could be taken. She therefore asked Conference to reject the motion and hoped that members would rest assured that the N.E.C. was behind them.

But before the applause which greeted this statement had died down, Mr. Bray was back at the microphone, to complain that the N.E.C. being "behind the transport staffs" was the trouble—it was as far behind them as was the Duke of Plaza Toro behind his troops! (*laughter*). He

"As far behind as was the Duke of Plaza Toro behind his troops"

was not asking Conference to endorse any more militant action than was necessary, but he did ask the N.E.C. to secure recognition and adequate representation for them.

Conference supported his demand, referred back the paragraph, and cheered again when the President said that, in view of its vote, the Council must do all it could to show that NALGO was in a fighting mood.

Next, delegates listened to a further statement from MISS POLE amplifying paragraph 80 of the Report recording the history of NALGO's unsuccessful efforts to represent its members on the negotiating machinery for road haulage staffs. When the Road Haulage Executive was formed, the paragraph reported, NALGO had claimed a share in the negotiating machinery, but the other trade unions recognised by the Executive objected on the ground that it had not previously organised road haulage staffs. Attempts to secure agreement with these unions failed and further attempts, through the Trades Union Congress and the Road Haulage Executive, were equally fruitless. In a final effort, the Association approached the Ministry of Transport and the Transport Commission; but the former said that it had no power to intervene, while the latter explained that it had recognised the Transport & General Workers' Union and the Railway Clerks' Association as the appropriate bodies to represent the administrative and clerical grades in road haulage, and that these two unions were not willing to admit NALGO's claims.

In these circumstances, said Miss Pole, the N.E.C. had regretfully concluded that nothing more could be done. She expressed the gratitude of the Council to those members who had remained loyal to NALGO.

COMPENSATION FIGHT

Lord Burden's tribute

Conference received this report without comment and, having approved the public relations and law and parliamentary sections of the Report, gave a warm welcome to LORD BURDEN, whose short address each year has now become a recognised part of Conference. After regretting that the Association's spokesman in the House of Commons, Mr. Geoffrey Hutchinson, M.P., had been prevented by the dictates of the party whips from attending, he went on to pay tribute to the skill and ability with which the Association, through its legal officer and honorary officers, had conducted its fight with the Ministry of Health, first in the Private Bills Committee, then on the floor of the House of Commons, to retain the 1933 compensation code. Although the Minister had won, the Association's case was still, he thought, unanswerable in logic, common sense, and justice. He was therefore glad to see on the agenda an N.E.C. motion suggesting further action.

Striking a personal note, Lord Burden recalled that, six years earlier, he left Conference to take part in the General Election. It was a momentous election, and had resulted in far-reaching changes profoundly affecting NALGO members.

"Those changes have brought many difficulties, problems, and disappointments," declared Lord Burden, "but the framework of the great social services has been fixed, and it is being appreciated more and more that their successful functioning depends on the trained ability of their clerical, professional, technical and administrative staffs—in short, on the membership of NALGO. Believing

Allegiance to Whitleyism reaffirmed

that, as I do, I am proud to have had the opportunity to do all I can to enhance the ever-growing prestige of NALGO, and to share in the joy and fellowship of this great Association (*loud cheers*).

Heartily endorsing the vote of thanks and appreciation to Lord Burden and Mr. Hutchinson, moved by W. J. CREED-BAILEY, **Surrey County,** Conference returned to the Annual Report. H. A. JONES, **Liverpool,** moved reference back of paragraph 131, dealing with the NALGO correspondence institute, in order to protest against the failure of the institute to provide a course of study for the examination of the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants.

For the N.E.C., A. E. ODELL, chairman of the education committee, said that it would readily supply such a course if there were adequate demand from members, but it was not convinced that the demand was there.

Satisfied with this explanation, Conference rejected the motion, and, after a protest by P. WADDELL, **Middlesex,** at the increase in the charges at the Association's Convalescent Home at Bournemouth had failed for lack of a seconder, approved the rest of the Report.

It then confirmed with acclamation the vote of thanks, moved by A. T. SIMONS, **Shropshire,** to the N.E.C. and honorary officers, heard the result of this year's election, to be reported in September "L.G.S.", and settled down, with more than a third of its time already gone, to tackle the remaining 346 items on the agenda.

HIGHER STANDARDS

Whitleyism the Key

First of these was an **N.E.C.** motion reaffirming the Association's belief in Whitleyism as the best means of establishing and maintaining the status and standards of the professional, administrative, technical, and clerical staffs in the employ of local authorities and public corporations. Moving it, E. F. BACON said that the Council was prepared to accept the following amendments:

By **Lancashire County,** inserting "miscellaneous" after "technical," and "nationalised services" after "local authorities."

By the **South Western district,** instructing the N.E.C. "to expedite the forming of Whitley machinery in those fields of the Association where it does not now exist."

By **Shipley,** instructing the N.E.C. "to review the operation of existing machinery."

Mr. Bacon asked that the amendment standing in the names of the **South Western district, Birmingham, Chislehurst and Sidcup,** and **Liverpool,** instructing the N.E.C. to "take steps through the recognised channels to secure quicker results from the operation of the Whitley machinery," be referred to the Council.

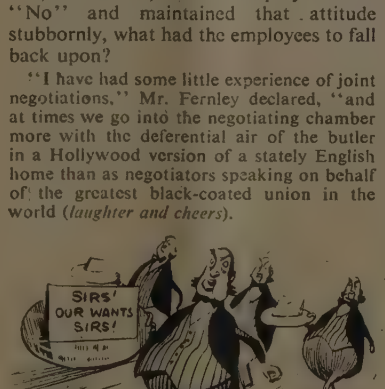
He reminded delegates of the position in local government thirty years ago, when men of his generation were returning from the first world war, and strenuous efforts were being made to secure for them reasonable standards. The cost of living had increased by nearly 100 per cent, and the only machinery available was the undignified scramble in personal approach to the various authorities, some good, some poor, and some bad, and some which invariably tied their standard to the penny rate. Only one policy offered any hope, and that was the policy the N.E.C. had followed for many years—allegiance to Whitleyism.

Now, Whitleyism covered almost every section of the membership. The machine was not perfect, but it produced results which could not otherwise be obtained. Members of the Council who had served on Whitley Councils for many years had not the slightest doubt that the policy must be one of trusting the staff side to carry on trying to improve the machinery, being mindful of its virtues, tolerant of its faults, and at all costs maintaining loyalty to its principles.

"Too much complacency"

The **Lancashire county** amendment having been approved, T. FERNLEY, **Manchester gas,** moved an amendment calling on the N.E.C. to "take vigorous action at all times to utilise every aspect of Whitleyism for the satisfactory settlement of the wages and conditions of service of all the Association's membership." There was, Mr. Fernley complained, too much complacency about the N.E.C. motion. Whitleyism had serious limitations, which members would be unwise to ignore. Oceans of time could be wasted in talk, procrastination could become a fine art, and, above all, if the employers said "No" and maintained that attitude stubbornly, what had the employees to fall back upon?

"I have had some little experience of joint negotiations," Mr. Fernley declared, "and at times we go into the negotiating chamber more with the deferential air of the butler in a Hollywood version of a stately English home than as negotiators speaking on behalf of the greatest black-coated union in the world (*laughter and cheers*).



"The deferential air of the butler . . ."

While not advocating "bull in a china shop" methods, he did stress that negotiators needed forbearance, decisiveness, courage, and, above all, enthusiasm for the cause. There was a feeling among a number of members that NALGO was pulling its punches.

T. Fernley *J. Besserman*

"My branch is not opposed to Whitleyism," concluded Mr. Fernley, "and our criticism is not academic or carping. But we must face the fact that the Whitley machinery must be used as never before to keep above the waters of inflation."

Opposing for the **N.E.C.,** A. E. NORTROP agreed that Whitley machinery should be reviewed, but denied that vigorous action was not being taken. There were two sides to every question. Again, possibly, decisions could be speeded up, but they might not always be satisfactory. "Supposing," he said, "the employers said they wanted a five per cent cut in salaries and we immediately agreed. I am sure you would disagree."

Employers criticised

Conference rejected the amendment, approved, without debate, the **South Western district** and **Shipley** amendments, and referred to the Council that seeking quicker results. Then came another critic, J. BESSERMAN, **Coventry,** with an amendment expressing grave concern at the "method of negotiation adopted by the employers' side of certain National Joint Councils and the failure of some authorities to implement the decisions of certain National Joint Councils."

Coventry, too, he said, was critical of N.E.C. complacency. In his statement on the salary negotiations, Mr. Young had told them that the employers' first counter-offer was something like half what was eventually gained by the staff side. That was to the credit of the staff side, but not to the credit of the employers. Without good will on both sides the Whitley machine could not function properly, and recently the employers had displayed a lack of good will.

"My branch is not opposed to Whitleyism," avowed Mr. Besserman. "It is the best machinery in existence, and it would be idle to deny the great success it has brought to the Association as a whole. But Conference must accept that Whitleyism is a weapon. The goal of the Association is the improvement of salaries and conditions of service, and Whitleyism should be one of the weapons in the achievement of that goal."

For the **N.E.C.,** G. R. ASHTON wasted few words in his reply. Mr. Besserman, he said, had dealt in generalities, but Conference had heard sufficient

Watch on salaries—but no fresh claims yet

evidence to show that there was no complacency on the part of the N.E.C. Conference agreed, rejecting the amendment.

Finally, a **Devon** amendment having been withdrawn, P. H. LIGHT, **Islington,** moved an amendment instructing the N.E.C. to investigate and report on further measures available to the staff when the employers adopted an unreasonable attitude or delaying tactics. He did not, Mr. Light explained, want to censure the staff side, and his branch agreed with the statement in the June "L.G.S." that arbitration would not give better results. But he would like the N.E.C. to consider what more it could do when negotiation failed.

P. H. Light

But A. E. NORTROP, **N.E.C.,** realising that on this issue he had Conference with him, would have none of it. Pointing to the great achievements in local government through Whitleyism and the progress being made in the electricity, gas, and health services, he asked Conference to reject the amendment and let the Council get on with the job. Conference did, and approved the original motion as amended.

N.E.C. PAY PLEDGE

"To safeguard standards"

It was with greater interest that delegates turned to the next motion which, with its amendments, provided a lively debate on the ever-burning issue of salaries. The motion, in the name of the **N.E.C.,** expressed concern at the effect of the continued rise in the cost of living and asked that the Council be authorised "to take every possible step to safeguard the salary standards of members in all services covered by the Association."

Moving this, H. R. JONES assured delegates that the Council was prepared to accept the responsibility which the motion would place upon it. But if it was to succeed something more than blunt demands was needed, and he asked Conference to leave it to the N.E.C. to do its utmost in the way it considered best.

Having unanimously adopted a **Barking** amendment, accepted by the N.E.C., to change the verb in the motion from "authorises" to "instructs," Conference went on to consider a **Middlesbrough** and **Smethwick** amendment, asking that salary standards be not only safeguarded but improved. Moving this, R. BALDWIN, **Middlesbrough,** said that it was based on three reasons: (i) the great increase in the cost of living since the beginning of the year; (ii) the inadequacy, to a large extent, of the recent settlement of the claim for a 20 per cent increase; and (iii) the certainty that price levels would continue to rise in the immediate future.

For the **N.E.C.,** however, H. R. JONES pointed out that the motion was specifically concerned with the cost of living; salary standards were a separate issue, and the two must be divorced. Conference agreed, rejecting the amendment.

"Further increase at once"

It was on the following amendment, in the name of **Birmingham,** that the major controversy developed. This—drafted, of course, before the result of the April salaries award was known—invited Conference, "in view of the certainty that any increase in salaries won as a result of the resolution passed at the Annual Conference, 1950, will not offset the rapidly accelerated rise in the cost of living since that date, and in view of the fact that world events make an even more serious rise inevitable," to instruct the N.E.C., "to claim a further all-round increase in salaries without delay."

Moving it in an able and well-delivered speech, P. D. MORGAN complained that, in its motion, the N.E.C. had asked for a blank cheque which it would date—"in the sweet by and by." His branch did not object to the blank cheque, but it thought there should be a date on it. It could even be 1951 if the negotiators went about it the right way.

"My branch feels," Mr. Morgan continued, "that the April agreement fails to restore our pre-war status vis-à-vis other sections of the community, and completely fails to keep pace with the very much increased cost of living since 1946. The case for a further claim, therefore, rests on the grounds that members are not getting their fair share of the national cake, and, even worse, there are no currants or cherries in the slice so grudgingly handed over (*laughter*).

"Take a look at the treatment received by other regiments in Britain's labour army. Between 1946 and 1950, many classes of workers had pay increases while—at the behest of the N.E.C.—our Association marked time. Finance clerks had the infuriating task of adjusting the wages of manual employees two and three times while their own salaries were frozen so hard that it took blowlamps to thaw them at Eastbourne in 1950 (*laughter*). The 'Ministry of Labour Gazette' states that the average weekly wage of a man in the engineering and allied trades rose from £3 9s. in 1938 to £7 10s. 5d. last October, while adult women's rates have risen by 150 per cent and those for girls under 18 by no less than 190 per cent."

"A Public Scandal"

By an agreement announced two or three months ago, he proceeded, the weekly wages of unskilled labourers in government industrial establishments were raised to £5 8s. It was nothing short of a public scandal when an unskilled navvy was, at 21, getting four shillings a week more than a matriculated General Division clerk aged 22 (*cheers*).

"I am not complaining that other sections of the workers are having pay rises," he went on. "Goodness knows, they feel the pinch as much as we do. But what the general public has got to realise is that the local government officer is part of the team and not just the twelfth man" (*cheers*). "It is time our negotiators woke up to the strength of NALGO's bargaining position, which is among the best in the country.

"Open your paper any morning at the City page and you will find the financial experts cooing—in the shy way they have—that there has been modest 'profit taking'. As the 'Daily Telegraph' Stock Exchange tipster cheerfully purred on May 10: 'These are prosperous times for the big battalions of British industry.' Are the members of NALGO prosperous? Does the N.E.C. think we are . . .? How are members coping with the housekeeping bills?"

The ordinary member was not interested in whether they should have claimed 20 per cent, or 40, or 50 per cent with the hope of getting half. That was the job of the experts. All he knew was that it was much harder to live on his money today than it was in 1938 or in 1946. The interim retail price index—a notoriously cautious barometer—bore that out. The latest figure for March was nearly 20 per cent up on June, 1947. But the 150,000 non-paying members—the wives and dependants of members—were not blinded by White Paper science. They did not have to face a budget once a year; they had to budget every day, every time they went out shopping (*hear, hear!*).

"Case for another 20 per cent"

The case for an all-round increase since the Korean war began was worth a separate 20 per cent all on its own. Oscar Hobson had written in the April "Lloyds Bank Review" that the present rise in prices was greater than in any previous equal period since 1939, that the gradient was steeper than the 1915-17 inflation, and that it closely resembled the famous 1919-20 inflation. Even more alarming was the prospect of what was to come. Everyone knew the fantastic prices wool had been fetching in the world market. Rubber, tin, cocoa, cotton, freight rates, metals, had all gone up commensurately since last July. Those wholesale leaps had not yet been reflected on shop window tickets, but it had to come.

He asked the N.E.C.: "How do you propose to shelter us from these phenomenal dark clouds that are almost upon us?" Members wanted no milk-and-water half-promises, such as the motion, but a positive guarantee that another claim would be tabled immediately (*cheers*). If the N.E.C. spokesman replied that it was too soon, delegates should not forget that it would be six months before the claim could even be considered by the National Joint Council, and who could forecast

what the next six months held in store? The N.E.C. should show earnest of its good faith by accepting the amendment.

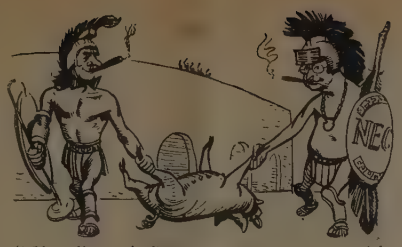
"A great responsibility rests with this Conference," concluded Mr. Morgan. "Are you prepared to condemn half a million people—our members and their dependants—to another petrifying wage freeze such as the N.E.C. imposed on you for five long years? Are you prepared to see the magnificent membership figure whittled away to almost nothing, or will you ensure the virility and strength of this organisation by instructing its leaders to show fight and do battle on our behalf. The future of NALGO is in your hands. In your own interests you must support this amendment" (*loud cheers*).

Seconding, E. G. SWAN, **Hertfordshire,** said that the recent award had by no means covered all local government staffs, nor the staffs of the nationalised industries.

Supporting, J. D. S. MOUNTFORD, **Surrey Electricity,** suggested that they should go for an immediate cost-of-living award of £100, together with a permanent commission to watch further fluctuations in the cost of living and adjust the award from time to time.

C. H. DODSON, **Coventry,** also supporting the amendment, recalled that the N.E.C. had asked for a mandate. "It is up to you," he said, "to see that they get it. Remember, these unwilling gladiators went into the arena believing that they could get nothing, but they came out with a prize—(*cheers and cries of 'no'*),

First opposition from the floor came



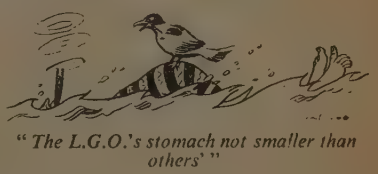
"*Unwilling gladiators . . . came out with a prize*"

from W. KENYON, **North-Western district,** who said he wanted to bring Conference down from the heights to which previous speakers had soared, so that they could get their feet firmly on the ground (*cheers*). Those who had taken part in local negotiations knew what happened. After going into all the facts and figures, the employers would say: "The whole question has been flogged. What additional facts can you give us which have altered the cost of living to such an extent as to justify an immediate increase?" The N.E.C. had already accepted the word "instruct."

Also opposing, F. E. TALBOT, **Teignmouth,** reminded Birmingham that NALGO covered smaller as well as larger branches—and in those branches officers were being dismissed as a result of the recent award. Most delegates, he suggested, had been agreeably surprised by the results of the negotiations and he therefore asked Conference to put the amendment into the waste-paper basket where it belonged (*cheers*).

Then, in a series of ironical quips, T. J. HUTTON, **Marylebone,** gave further support to Birmingham. He had listened, he said, with great interest to Mr. Young's statement earlier. It was a masterly exposition and he was very honest. He said, at one stage, that the negotiations had brought results which the N.E.C. thought could never be achieved. "What he was trying to explain," said Mr. Hutton, "was that this year the N.E.C. is asking you to ask them to defend what you got by not taking their advice last year! (*laughter*). Last year you were asked to stand still, this year you are being asked to mark time!"

The N.E.C. motion did not deny that the cost of living was rising, neither did it deny that a further claim was necessary. Other workers' wages had been rising fast and the N.E.C. admitted that those of the local government officer could not stand still. The President would be the first to admit that the local government officer's stomach was not smaller than those of other people! (*laughter*).



"*The L.G.O.'s stomach not smaller than others*'"

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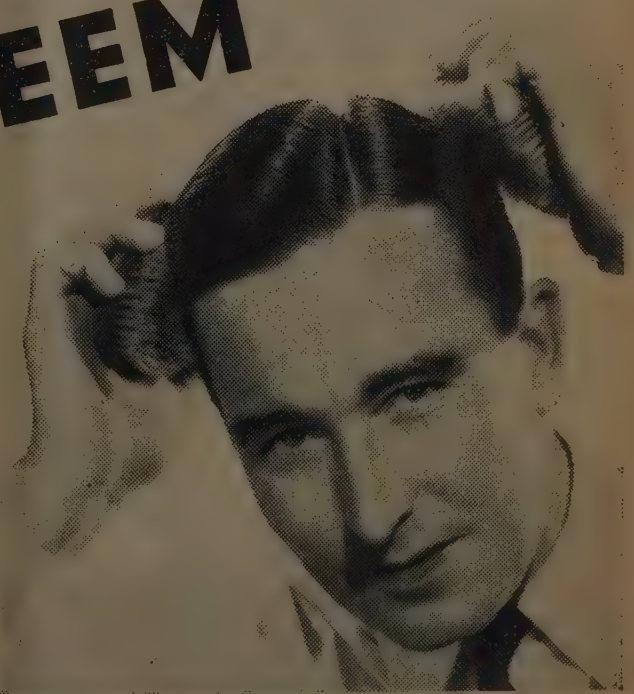


"These rather homely-looking gentlemen on the shelf behind me," he said, "would have you believe that they are nothing more than rows of Archie Andrews waiting for you to put words into their mouths." (*laughter*). It has been said that no motion is necessary, that the purpose of the N.E.C. is to safeguard and to improve the salary scales. That might be true, but they do need an idea—so let us be generous and not deny them that idea! (*laughter*). Where would the N.E.C. be if we had not given them an idea last year? Where would we be if we had taken the N.E.C.'s advice? We would still be waiting for the little we have got" (*cheers*).

T. J. Hutton

After R. J. LEWIS, **Glamorganshire,** had branded the amendment as unrealistic and implying a repudiation of the agreement just reached, G. R. ASHTON replied for the N.E.C. The Council, he said, was in full sympathy with many of the views expressed and, in fact, most of the information given had been used in the salaries campaign. They appreciated that the cost of living was rising, and that the local government officer and his colleagues in other fields needed more money as soon as they could get it. It was when a move was made to turn those needs into realities that difficulties were encountered.

"Not afraid to fight"

"I want, at the outset," Mr. Ashton declared, "to dispel any idea that there is any fear on the part of the negotiators to go in and fight. There is not. In fact, we are getting battle-scarred, and a few more scratches will not do us much harm."

The motion had been tabled to get the views of Conference. The N.E.C. was not quarrelling or quibbling with those views, but Mr. Morgan had used the phrase "the mechanics of the case are for the experts," and that was the whole point. Part of the last claim—that for health staffs—had not yet been brought to fruition. He seriously suggested that, if the negotiators went in now, as had been proposed, for a further immediate all-round increase, the result would be determined before they entered the room—and he did not say that in any defeatist spirit. If Conference so decided, they would go in and fight—but they believed that, if they did, their claim would be turned down, and future claims might be prejudiced.

The next step in the salary negotiations—and it was a continuous policy—was essentially one of timing, and that must be left to the negotiators. Proof had been given during the last twelve months that there was ability in the team and a singleness of purpose to look after the interests of members, not only in local government, but in all the services. "We are watching the position very carefully," concluded Mr. Ashton. "I appeal to you to leave the matter in our hands."

On a show of hands, the President declared the amendment lost. Delegates called for a count, which showed the amendment to be defeated by 733 votes to 420. A card vote was demanded and the result of this, declared after the luncheon adjournment, showed the amendment lost by 98,426 votes to 77,003. Amid cheers, the motion, as amended, was then carried.

"Must cut living costs"

Next, J. M. ANDERSON moved a **Glasgow** motion instructing the N.E.C. "to make representations to the Government to control rigidly the prices of necessities and to examine ways and means of effecting a substantial reduction in the cost of living, stressing to the Government that the only alternative is further and frequent salary claims."

"Rows of Archie Andrews"

The real problem facing NALGO, and the whole trade union movement, said Mr. Anderson, was how to increase or even maintain the *real* worth of wages. Over the past four years, and particularly since 1948, any rise in the basic wages pool had been more than drained off by the price manipulators, who had to increase the percentage of profit to allow for falling off of purchases.

20 per cent rise this year?

Since the Government had stabilised subsidies on necessities, their prices had been steadily rising, and, with the rearmament programme, the ever-rising costs of raw materials, and the high price of imports, it would be a bold prophet who would estimate what prices would be by next December. Mr. Dudley Seers, the economist, in an article in the March "L.G.S." had calculated that the rise in import prices, plus increased profits, during the latter half of 1950 would add £600—£700 millions to the cost of living, an increase of between 7 or 8 per cent. But wage rates in the same period, according to the Ministry of Labour, had increased by just over £100 million—less than one-sixth of that amount. This year, so far, the situation was even worse. The raw material shortage was now extremely grave, and Mr. Seers's estimate of a 15 per cent rise in living costs during 1951 erred on the side of moderation. Anything up to a 20 per cent rise was probable.

Next, J. LONGBOTTOM, **Bradford,** moved an amendment to delete from the motion the reference to controlling the prices of necessities. His branch, he explained, did not oppose the spirit of the motion, but thought that the reference to price controls would undermine its effectiveness.

G. R. ASHTON, **N.E.C.,** having announced that the Council was prepared to accept the motion but considered that the amendment would not achieve the desired effect, Conference rejected the amendment and adopted the motion.

PUBLIC RELATIONS POLICY

Continuous programme urged

The two following motions, criticising the prosecution of the salaries claim, having been withdrawn, Conference left the salaries issue to turn to the N.E.C. motion on public relations policy. This, after acknowledging the contribution towards the salaries campaign made by district committees, branches, and members, and recognising "the imperative need for the Association to possess a nation-wide and efficient public relations organisation to continue the work thus begun and to meet similar contingencies in the future," invited Conference to reaffirm the public relations policy adopted in 1949 and to call upon every branch and district committee "to review its public relations arrangements and vigorously to pursue a continuous programme of public relations." Moving it, N. W. BINGHAM, chairman of the N.E.C.'s public relations committee, said that it had been a thrilling experience for those engaged in the campaign at the centre to see the enthusiasm which districts, branches, and members put into it. But, although the publicity obtained had been better than was expected, that success was due to the efforts of a limited number of branches and individuals, and it was noticeable that the branches which were successful in the publicity campaign were invariably those which had behind them a history of general public relations organisation going back over a long period, while those which were not so successful had no such experience.

Although they did not contemplate another campaign on the same lines, no one knew what the future would be, and the N.E.C. therefore urged branches and districts, as well as members, to give effect to the public relations policy, so that, if and when it became necessary to use it again in the coming years, the machinery would be ready to put into action without last-minute improvisation.

An amendment by **Metropolitan district** having been withdrawn, Conference unanimously approved the motion.

At this point, the President suggested that Conference should jump to item 71 of the agenda, an important N.E.C. motion inviting Conference to approve a request to the appropriate Ministry and

Call for early decision on widows' pensions

the local authorities' associations to expedite a satisfactory conclusion of the present discussions with NALGO on amendments (including widows' pensions) to the superannuation scheme.

Moving this, P. H. HARROLD, honorary solicitor for England, said that it was to draw attention to the long delay which had taken place since NALGO first asked the Ministry and the local authorities' associations to deal with widows' pensions in April, 1948. There had been one or two meetings twelve months later, after which more than a year had passed while the associations were taking actuarial advice, and, apart from some developments with which he would deal, there had been no progress.

The present position was that officers who came under the health service superannuation regulations were able to provide automatically for pensions for their widows should they die in the service or after retirement, but there was no such provision for the widows of local government officers in the 1937 Superannuation Act. Widows of officers subject to local Acts could ask the local authority for charity, but that was satisfactory neither to the widow nor to the local authority. An officer subject to the 1937 Act, if he were ailing when he retired, could do nothing to provide for his widow on his death. Only the healthy man was allowed to allocate a pension.

Higher contributions opposed

In its Annual Report for 1948, the N.E.C. had set out the proposals it had submitted to the local authorities' associations for amendment of the 1937 Act. When those proposals were tabled, the associations suggested that the great burden falling upon local authority superannuation funds as a result of rising salaries and falling interest rates should be met by an increase in the rate of officers' contributions. In reply to this, NALGO had pointed out that the fall in the rate of interest earned by superannuation funds was more than offset by the parallel fall in the rate which local authorities had to pay for their own borrowings; and had argued that it would be wrong to impose upon employees the results of economic factors arising out of the increased cost of living. The local authorities' associations had obtained an actuarial report, and prepared recommendations for their constituent authorities.

"I am happy to report," Mr. Harrold continued, "that they have recommended that there should be no increase in contributions for present benefits (*cheers*). That is not accepted by all the associations, and therefore any suggestion from NALGO that we are in a position to pay increased contributions would be most dangerous. My attitude has been one of complete resistance to increased contributions."

The associations had refused to consider the suggestions that an officer should have the right to retire at 60 (55 in the case of women) irrespective of his length of service, or that he should have the right to retire on a pension of forty-sixtieths of average salary on completing 40 years' service before reaching the age of 60. For the rest, all save one of the associations had provisionally accepted some of NALGO's proposals and had rejected others. Negotiations were continuing.

The Council, continued Mr. Harrold, could not accept two amendments, one by **Scottish district** and **Greenock** urging that the widows' pensions provisions be "on the lines of the provision recently made in the civil service," the other by **South Wales and Monmouthshire district** and **Monmouthshire,** designed to place a twelve-months' time limit on the negotiations. The first was withdrawn and the second rejected after Mr. Harrold had pointed out that it might lead the local authorities' associations to think that they had twelve months in which to consider the problem.

Pensions for orphans, too

R. G. OAKLEY moved a **Birmingham** amendment seeking to substitute for the parenthetical reference to widows' pensions in the motion the more specific direction that pensions for widows and orphans of local government officers should be "not less favourable than those operating in respect of officers of the new nationalised boards and hospital committees." The N.E.C.'s report, said Mr. Oakley, seemed to imply that the Council was asking for the national health service scheme as an alternative to the 1937 local government scheme and that the matter was almost a *fait accompli*. But Birmingham wished to extend the pension to orphans as well as to widows, and did not consider the health service scheme an adequate alternative; there was much to be said for the electricity scheme.

There was growing apprehension about any arrangement contemplating reduced pensions in present conditions, and Birmingham considered that higher contributions during an officer's working career, attracting income-tax relief, would be more acceptable. In the electricity scheme, additional contributions were supported by twice the amount from the Board, a provision encouraging providence. An all-out effort should be made, therefore, to obtain a similar scheme, and to accept the health scheme only as second best.

Conference, however, decided by a large majority to accept Mr. Harrold's advice and refer the amendment to the Council.

Alternative Bristol scheme

Still on the subject of widows' pensions, delegates next turned to a **Bristol and district** motion, instructing the N.E.C. to endeavour immediately to obtain amendment of the Local Government Superannuation Act to provide family benefits, by means of additional contributions, for widows and dependants of officers who die in the service; and of the rules relating to allocations under Section 9 of the Act, so that allocations might be made by married and unmarried officers without medical examination. The motion also asked that the responsible N.E.C. committee be authorised to receive deputations from branches and districts with views to express before the Association was committed to any new scheme.

Moving this, A. E. FARBROTHER wondered whether delegates realised that adoption of the health service scheme might mean a six per cent contribution, and reduction of pension from sixtieths to eightieths for each year of contributory

J. E. Jenkins, the Association's financial officer, and the scrutineers counting one of the three card votes

service. The 51 per cent of members in the General and Clerical Divisions could not afford that—nor should they forget the 35,000 women members.

Conference had given no mandate for acceptance of the health service or any other scheme, nor had it had any report comparing the local government and health service schemes. His branch had gone into the matter thoroughly and had circulated a statement, comparing the benefits of the two schemes, to every branch in the country. As a result, it had been inundated with requests for further copies. Unable to supply these, the branch had asked Headquarters to publish the scheme in "L.G.S.," but the reply had come back: "We cannot publish anything controversial like that." (*This statement was incorrect. The reply made no mention of "anything controversial," but explained that, so as not to prejudice discussion at Conference, and to be fair to delegates, "L.G.S." made it a rule not to give publicity to arguments for or against particular items on the Conference agenda after the preliminary agenda had been published.*—ED.)

Every member of his branch, Mr. Farbrother continued, was sent a copy of the statement, and asked to say whether he favoured paying additional contributions to provide widows' and dependants' pensions. Of 1,000 papers distributed, nearly 800 were returned and, of those, 751 favoured additional contributions and only 21 opposed.

Seconding, in a vigorous speech, MISS O. CROUCH, **Bristol,** suggested that every man wanted the best for those he would leave behind him. Of course, he would have to pay more—but was it not worth another one or two per cent on salary throughout working life? Bristol had done its best to produce such a scheme. The only other scheme before members was the health service scheme, and that, in her view, had neither a father nor a mother! "Why cannot we have our own scheme?" Miss Crouch demanded. "We have talked about negotiations for three years. Elephants take three years to produce their young, but at least they produce elephants!" (*laughter and cheers*).

Would cost members more

Opposing the motion for the N.E.C., P. H. HARROLD said the N.E.C. had done its best to help Bristol to get what it wanted. The branch had failed to get it in the Bristol Corporation Bill, and now it was trying to get it by submitting the proposal as part of the national proposals.

Bristol's proposal, Mr. Harrold explained, was that all local government officers should remain subject to the provisions of the 1937 Superannuation Act, but that the widows' pension should be compulsorily allocated, whether or not the pensioner was in good health on retirement. In addition, to provide widows' pension cover during the period of the officer's employment, a further one-and-a-half per cent per annum was to be paid.

The national health service scheme provided a pension based on one-eightieth part of average retiring salary for each year's service—instead of one-sixtieth as in the local government scheme—plus a lump sum payment of three-eightieths of salary for the man who did not have to provide for a widow; these, together, were roughly equivalent to the pension under the 1937 Local Government Act. Where the officer was married, the lump sum was reduced to one-eightieth of salary to provide widow's pension cover. In addition, the scheme provided for a pension in the event of retirement after injury, a short-service gratuity, a death gratuity, and allocation of pension to dependants other than a widow (subject to the officer being in good health on retirement).

One of the reasons the N.E.C. did not prefer the Bristol scheme was that the branch's calculations were wrong. It estimated that contributions would have to be increased by one-and-a-half per cent of salary, but actuarial evidence showed that it was more likely to be one-and-three-quarters to two per cent. Therefore, adoption of the Bristol scheme would mean that all local government officers subject to the 1937 Act would probably have to pay eight per cent. That meant that an officer earning £500 a year and now contributing 15s. a week towards the cost of his pension would have to find an extra 4s. or 5s. a week. Previous speakers had emphasised the burden already falling on these officers. Conference had given no mandate for such an increase in contributions—but it had given a mandate, in 1948, for the scheme put forward by the N.E.C.

"Might prove disastrous"

If Conference accepted the motion, it might prove disastrous, because the negotiators would have to go back to the local authorities' associations and say: "We do not want what Conference asked us to get in 1948. We want to change our plans." The answer would be: "You cannot get anything without a further actuarial report," and the whole matter would be put back for two or three years.

Parliament had said that there must be uniformity in superannuation provisions. The effect of the Bristol motion would be that, whereas electricity and health service officers would be contributing six per cent to their schemes, inclusive of widows' pension, local government officers would be paying eight per cent. How could there be transfer between the various services with this lack of uniformity? "Bristol branch," Mr. Harrold concluded, "has had a fair crack of the whip and it would be wrong now to throw over the proposals which the N.E.C. has put forward, and which might be approaching fruition" (*cheers*).

Claiming his right of reply, Mr. Farbrother made a further effort to persuade Conference that the Bristol scheme was best. But it refused to be convinced, rejected the motion by an overwhelming majority, and adjourned for the day.

RECONSTRUCTING NALGO

"An integral Association"

A separate section of the agenda had been devoted to 140 motions and amendments on the N.E.C. proposals for adaptation of the Association's machinery, designed to give members in each of the five services it represents a recognised part in the direction of service conditions work and policy, to increase the efficiency of Conference and the N.E.C., and to raise subscriptions to cover increasing commitments and accumulate a £500,000 reserve fund within ten years. The pre-

C. J. Newman

liminary proposals as submitted to last year's Conference were published in the September, 1950, "L.G.S.," while amendments subsequently approved by the N.E.C. in the light of the debate at the 1950 Conference, together with the financial proposals, were published in the December, 1950, number. Members wishing to follow the debate in detail should refer to these reports, or to a copy of the complete document as circulated to branches.

Conference devoted the whole of its third day to consideration of this separate agenda, to which it gave serious and closely interested attention. The discussion opened with an N.E.C. motion approving the proposals and authorising the Council to prepare the necessary rules to give effect to them for submission to the 1952 Conference.

Moving this, C. J. NEWMAN, **N.E.C.,** said that the fundamental basis of the scheme was that NALGO must remain an integral association, not become a federal structure. The scheme was necessary because of the Association's growth and the decision to admit into membership the officers of nationalised services. The N.E.C. wanted to make those officers real members—"to make them feel that we local government people are just as interested in their welfare and service conditions as we are in our own." If that were done, NALGO could continue to grow in strength and in unity (*cheers*).

"Safeguard the small branches"

First challenge to this "fundamental basis" came from F. WORTHY, **Bury St. Edmunds,** with an amendment roundly condemning the scheme as "the most

Claims of small branches and service groups

flagrant subjection of the local government officer," since it proposed practically to disenfranchise some 50 per cent of the branches, sacrificing them "on the altar of the nationalised services," and calling on Conference to reject the scheme and instruct the N.E.C. to redraft it "so as to safeguard adequately the identity and voting strength of the smaller branches."

Admitting that this was strongly worded —"in fact, in glorious Technicolor," Mr. Worthy said that, if the scheme went through, 600 of the Association's 1,200 branches would be unable to send a delegate to Conference. Yet the small man in the small branch was the backbone of NALGO. In his own district, whereas the county council and county borough branch had only 75 per cent in membership, the borough, urban, and rural branches had between 85 and 95 per cent in membership. Adoption of the scheme would mean that these small branches would have to amalgamate with larger branches, possibly 20 miles away, and with which they had no community of interest. The small branches wanted the democratic right to send a delegate to Conference, and to submit and speak on motions or amendments without entanglement with district committees or other larger bodies.

Opposing for the **N.E.C.**, J. P. PHOENIX denied any intention to abolish small branches. It was false to suggest that to prevent a branch sending a delegate to Conference was equivalent to disenfranchising it: every branch would still be able to send its delegates to the district committee, to fight with the N.E.C. over service conditions, and to do many other things. Nevertheless, though he asked Conference to reject the amendment, he must confess that he had read it with joy; it was lustily expressed, had guts, and was a welcome change from the more usual type proposing "for 'may' read 'shall'."

"Always in minority"

Conference rejected the amendment by an overwhelming majority, and turned to the next, condemning the adaptation scheme for precisely opposite reasons. This, moved by A. L. HODGES, **S.W. Electricity Board,** viewed with concern the lack of safeguards in the scheme "to ensure the continuance of full minority expression of utility branches, because of the sheer weight of numbers of local authority branches' representatives in the newly-constituted district committees."

His branch's concern, Mr. Hodges explained, was that the organisation of the nationalised services, with not more than six or seven branches within each board's area, meant that they would always be in a minority in respect of representation.

C. R. GIBSON, **Bristol Electricity,** though far from happy about the position of members in the nationalised services, opposed the amendment on the ground that it was sectarian and tended to split Conference into two sections, local government and utility services, when they should be working for unity. After further opposition, Conference rejected this amendment also by an overwhelming majority.

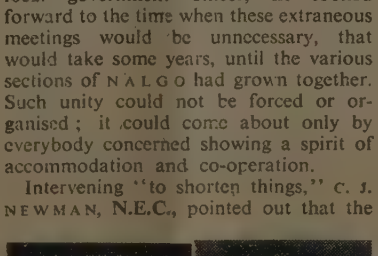
Conference group meetings

There followed what appeared to be a needlessly lively debate on the N.E.C. suggestion that the Conference meetings of delegates from the several service groups, started in 1947, should be discontinued once the new constitution had come into operation. While leaving to Conference the decision whether or not these meetings should continue, the N.E.C. had expressed the opinion that, with a proper arrangement of the agenda, Conference itself would provide all necessary machinery for debate and the determination of policy. Challenging this view in an amendment in the name of his district, and the **Bristol, Croydon and West Kent sub-area, Leeds and district,** and **Manchester sub-area** electricity branches, P. W. ENGLISH, **Metropolitan District** put three points in opposition:

1. The Conference agenda nowadays was so long that it was impossible for any domestic issue relating to a particular service to be discussed fully;
2. If group meetings were discontinued, members of the groups would be forced to adopt the detestable practice, already too much in evidence, of "getting into holes and corners, in passages and other places," to fix policy, rather than dealing with it in the open;
3. It was illogical to suggest that sectional meetings should not be held—and if they were held, they should be properly organised, with a constitutional agenda and all concerned attending.

Seconding, H. CHARLTON, **North Western District,** said that although, as a local government officer, he looked forward to the time when these extraneous meetings would be unnecessary, that would take some years, until the various sections of NALGO had grown together. Such unity could not be forced or organised; it could come about only by everybody concerned showing a spirit of accommodation and co-operation.

Intervening "to shorten things," C. J. NEWMAN, **N.E.C.,** pointed out that the paragraph of the scheme which had been challenged presented no more than the opinion of the Council. If Conference considered that the meetings should continue on existing lines, the N.E.C. was happy. Conference did so decide, unanimously, leaving everybody happy.



A. L. Hodges *C. R. Gibson*

Section I(c) of the scheme proposed that branch motions for Conference "shall be submitted in the first instance for consideration by the appropriate district committee" and, if approved by it, should appear on the Conference agenda in the joint names of the branch and district committee. If not approved, the branch should have the option of retaining the motion on the Conference agenda or of withdrawing it. To this, C. R. GIBSON, **Bristol Electricity,** moved that the word "may" be substituted for "shall" on the ground that the imperative was pointless in this context. Branches should be required to submit motions to the district committee only if it were contemplated that the district should have the power to veto them: but that was clearly not the intention of the N.E.C.

Replying for the N.E.C., C. J. NEWMAN explained that it wanted the district committee to act as a sieve for Conference motions—and if that were approved, the sieve ought to be used—but it did not want the district to become an "iron curtain" between branches and Conference, as would happen were it to be empowered to veto branch motions. The Conference agenda got bigger every year, and heaven knew where it would finish. The N.E.C. considered that it could rely on branches to deal properly with motions which the district committee was unwilling to support. Conference accepted this view, rejecting the amendment, and went on to adopt, without hesitation, a **Canvey Island** amendment proposing that branch motions approved by the district committee should go to Conference "in the name of the branch supported by the district committee." rather than "in the joint names of the branch and the district committee."

Delegate for every branch?

The next amendment, by the **Eastern District,** reverted to the major issue it had raised at the opening of the debate, branch representation at Conference. Moving that section I(e) of the scheme, which proposed to "freeze" Conference to a static size of 1,250 delegates, be amended "to provide that every branch shall have the right to send a delegate," E. G. EUINTON said that its object was simply to establish the fundamental principle enunciated by Mr. Newman that NALGO should remain an integral association.

Seconding, W. B. SLOPE, **Luton,** urged delegates not to sacrifice the interests of small branches on the altar of administrative convenience. "It does

Small branches win fight for representation

not matter a tinker's cuss or two hoots whether we go to one place or two or three for our Conference," he declared. "What does matter is the absolute democratic right of the small branches to be represented, and that right must be preserved" (*cheers*).

R. A. WARREN, **N.E. London Electricity,** speaking as a delegate attending his first Conference, suggested that the gathering was already too big. A year ago, it had been agreed to limit the representation of the larger branches, and it was inequitable to suggest that, when a branch of 600 members was allowed only three delegates, 25 branches of 24 members each should have 25 delegates to represent the same number of members. The solution was to eliminate some of the smaller branches.

To this, F. E. TALBOT, **Teignmouth,** retorted with a call to delegates not to muzzle the small branches. NALGO was appealing for 100 per cent membership—but it was not to the small branches, which already had 100 per cent membership, but to the big branches, that that appeal was directed.

"One delegate enough"

P. SHEPPARD, **Kingsclere and Whitchurch**—a branch of 24 members—contended that delegates were sent to Conference not primarily to speak—for if every delegate spoke on every subject, or even on one subject only, the Conference would never end—but to vote on behalf of their branches, and to report the proceedings to their branches. Some of the big branches, it appeared, were not satisfied with the suggestion that they should have a maximum representation of six delegates; they wanted seven or ten. Why? Were they going to give ten reports? Surely one delegate was enough for every branch, whatever its size.

E. R. LUKE, **Denbighshire,** declaring the amendment to be the most important on the whole agenda, warned that, unless the interests of the small branches were protected, NALGO must deteriorate. The small branch played a part as big as, if not bigger than, that played by the big branches (*cheers*).

R. C. FOYSTER, **Canvey Island,** urged that the right of every member to have a delegate at Conference able to raise any point which his branch wished to bring before the whole membership was paramount, and the difficulty of finding halls big enough to hold all delegates must not be allowed to stand in the way.

C. R. SANDELL, **Pembroke and District,** speaking as delegate of one of the smallest branches (with 17 members) but with 100 per cent membership, insisted that there was less apathy in the small branches than in the bigger ones. A year ago, the Southend delegate had told Conference that, out of 500 members, his branch could not find a secretary. Birmingham with 5,000 members, had announced with pride that 500 had attended its annual general meeting. Nine out of ten members had not bothered to attend, and they were proud of it! That was not the position in the small branches. One good man could adequately represent the views of any branch

R. C. Foyster *C. R. Sandell*

at Conference. Today, the big branches with several delegates operated a rota system. The previous day, the representative of a branch with five delegates had moved a motion but failed to find a seconder. Where were the other four?

The President: "In the Alpine Bar!" (*laughter*).

Mr. Sandell: "Exactly, Mr. President, or farther afield" (*laughter*).

The proposed restriction, Mr. Sandell continued, would operate particularly harshly on rural district council branches, and, if it were adopted, within a few years only one R.D.C. branch in the whole of Wales—Wrexham, with 70 members—would be represented at Conference.

J. SUTCLIFFE, **Westminster,** also supported, although, as he confessed, amid laughter, he lived in the centre of the greatest city in the world—in Leicester Square. It was in the stones and crevices, he said, that the seeds of discontent and misrepresentation grew. But for the presence of the smaller branches at Conference, the N.E.C. would at that moment have been saddled with a new salary claim.

Big branch's problems

After this long procession of speakers on behalf of the small branches came E. G. COULDREY, **Glamorgan,** to put the opposing view. They should remember, he urged, that the big branch, and particularly the big composite branch like his own, faced a multiplicity of problems which differed from those of the smaller branches. It was unfair to expect one or two delegates adequately to express the opinions of the various classes of officers forming the membership of such a branch.

Replying to the debate for the N.E.C., C. J. NEWMAN asked Conference to be reasonable. Democracy had to work; it was not just a beautiful theory. It might be thought from some of the speeches that every small branch was going to be disenfranchised. That was not so. The scheme provided that every branch with 36 or more members should be able to send a delegate to Conference and that 125 seats should be shared among the 290 branches with fewer than 36 members; each of these smaller branches would have an opportunity of sending to Conference at least once in three years. Was it democratic to suggest that the largest branches should content themselves with one delegate, as the amendment implied?

Mr. Euinton rose on a point of order to challenge this statement. The amendment, he protested, said nothing about the representation of big branches.

Accepting this correction, Mr. Newman went on to point out that the basic problem was how to control the size of Conference while giving proper representation to branches. A small branch, unable to send a delegate to Conference, would still put forward anything it wished in the district committee and, if the district committee agreed, the issue would be brought to Conference and debated exactly as if the branch had a representative there to put it forward.

Notwithstanding this defence of the N.E.C. proposal, Conference, amid loud cheers, adopted the amendment on a show of hands and by a substantial majority. Mr. Newman called for a card vote, but, fewer than the required 50 delegates rising to support this demand, the President refused it.

There followed a final amendment to this section of the scheme—a proposal by **North Northants** to allow one delegate to all branches of up to 603 members, two to those with 604—1,207 members, three to those with 1,202—2,415, four to those

"I live in Leicester Square"

with 2,416—4,831, and five to all with more than 4,831 members. Moving this, F. W. GRANT explained that its adoption would ensure representation to every branch while keeping the total number within the maximum of 1,250 desired by the N.E.C.

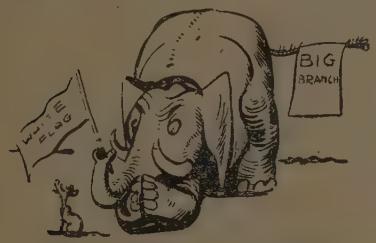
Seconding, R. D. STONE, **Hendon Group Hospitals,** urged that it provided the best way of retaining the principle of representation of every branch without

No priority for service groups on the N.E.C.

making Conference unwieldy. It was thus an honest attempt to give effect to the previous decision.

From the platform, J. P. PHOENIX said that the N.E.C. was hastily reshuffling its views, in the light of the vote just taken (*laughter*). Logically, it ought to accept the amendment, since it wanted a smaller Conference. But it still felt that the scheme proposed in the amendment was "a bit heavy" on the big branches (for which its own scheme had provided up to a maximum of six delegates).

R. RILEY, **Manchester,** opposing, argued that the regimented approach was impracticable and unfair to the big



"Don't be unfair to the big branches."

branch. To reduce their representation would do them irreparable damage. He realised the conscientious work of those in the rural areas, but they did not have the problems of the large branch.

Problem left to N.E.C.

A. F. ENSOR, **Brighton,** also opposing, said he was certain that, having won their important point, the small branches did not want the bigger branches to be given "a raw deal" (*hear, hear!*). The right course now, in view of the decision just taken, was to withdraw all the remaining amendments on the size of Conference and to allow the N.E.C. to consider the problem and produce a new, sensible, and workable scheme which, while ensuring that every branch should send at least one delegate, would allow the bigger branches to send as many delegates as could conveniently be accommodated.

For the N.E.C., C. J. NEWMAN suggested that this was the obvious course. The Council accepted the decision of Conference, but needed time to think out its implications. It would be better, he suggested, to refer the amendments to it for consideration, rather than to withdraw them, then it could present a fresh report next year. Conference approved unanimously, with the result that the remaining eight amendments on the size of Conference, including that from North Northants which had given rise to the debate, were referred *en bloc*.

From the size and composition of Conference, delegates turned to the size and composition of the N.E.C. The Council had proposed that it should be composed on the "territorial" and not the "service group" principle—that is, that each N.E.C. member should be elected by and should represent all the members, of all services, in his electoral area; but had added the safeguard that, if it happened that the Council so elected did not include any member of a particular service group, the chairman of the service conditions sub-committee for that group should be co-opted to it.

"Attempt to sectionalise"

This proposal was challenged by a **Liverpool No. 3 Health Services** branch amendment, proposing that each service group should have at least four representatives on the Council, any deficiency below four being made up by members appointed by the appropriate service conditions sub-committee. Moving this, W. BARROW argued that one representative from a service group was not enough—particularly if, as the scheme implied, he were also to be a branch officer and chairman of the district or N.E.C. service conditions sub-committees for his group.

R. D. WHITLAM, **Bermondsey,** opposed, on the ground that the amendment amounted to an attempt by the service groups to claim priority on the N.E.C. They were assured of a minimum of one seat, and it was his experience that a good man, whatever his service, would get a chance of election. Conference had been given a call for unity, but this was an attempt to sectionalise it. Where would the process stop? They might have the sanitary inspectors and other groups within local government claiming a special representation for their sectional interests.

W. G. BRAY, **Bristol Tramways,** supporting the amendment, declared that the N.E.C. today did not even partially understand the problems of transport members. In the transport field, there were four bodies which had about as much relationship to one another as did local government and electricity. While he supported the principle of territorial representation, there must be safeguards if the homogeneity of NALGO were not to suffer.

Replying for the N.E.C., W. F. APPLETON said that Mr. Whitlam had answered the case for him. The annual election sent the best men to the Council, irrespective of the service to which they belonged, and there was nothing more to be said. Conference agreed, rejecting the amendment.

One-year term for Council

It likewise rejected a **South West Sussex Gas** branch amendment, briefly moved by K. J. CUNDELL, designed to increase from two to four the minimum number of N.E.C. members to represent any district, and all other amendments to the N.E.C.'s proposals on representation were withdrawn. There remained two further amendments to this section of the scheme, one, from the **Southern District** and **Basingstoke and district,** proposing that the N.E.C. should be elected for three years, one-third of the members retiring annually; the other, from **Bognor Regis,** proposing a two-year term, one-half of the Council retiring annually. Moving the first of these, MISS D. H. SUTTON, **Basingstoke,** suggested that its adoption would ensure greater continuity.

Replying for the N.E.C., J. P. PHOENIX recalled his comment at a previous Conference—that he was prepared to trust the N.E.C. implicitly—for one year (*laughter*). That was before his election to the N.E.C. Now that he was a member, he was astonished at the duration of his trustfulness (*laughter*). He therefore suggested that the amendment should be rejected. Conference agreed, whereupon H. WATKINS, **Bognor Regis,** withdrew his branch's proposal to give the Council a two-year term.

Size of branches

Delegates next turned to the more controversial problems of the size and nature of branches. In its scheme, the N.E.C. had drawn attention to the difficulties created by the large number of very small branches, especially in local government, had suggested that 75 members was the minimum level at which a branch could function economically and effectively, had proposed that this standard should be adopted, "not as a rigid rule, but as a criterion," had urged that, as soon as practicable, branches should be confined to members belonging to one service, with breaking up of the present "mixed" branches, and had invited district committees to observe these principles in conducting their general oversight of branch organisation. These proposals were roundly challenged by F. SHEPPARD, **Kingsclere and Whitchurch,** in an amendment proposing replacement of the whole section by a new one imposing no limitation on the size of branches, providing that there should be only one branch in any borough or county district area, and leaving members free to join any branch they considered convenient.

For the N.E.C., R. EVANS opposed the amendment because it would not work. The scheme, he assured Conference, would not disturb any existing branch. All it proposed was consultation and such readjustments as might seem necessary after that consultation, with the consent of the parties concerned. The suggestion that there should be only one branch in a particular borough or county district area, was impracticable. Some big county boroughs already had as many as five branches, all of reasonable size, all serving the needs of their respective members, and all working adequately.

Recognising the force of this argument, Conference rejected the amendment. But this did not end the debate, which continued on a **West Bridgford** motion, moved

Future structure of the district committee

by H. GREEN, to delete the whole of the section of the scheme dealing with the size of branches. The small branches, Mr. Green claimed, were the backbone of NALGO—and they did not accept the statement that a membership of 75 was the minimum at which a branch could be run economically and effectively. Size was not synonymous with efficiency.

Seconding, E. W. GRANT, **North Northants**, feared that, although a membership of 75 was put forward as a criterion and not a rigid rule, it might become the thin end of the wedge for enforcing such a standard. The only standards that should be recognised were 100 per cent membership and 100 per cent interest (*cheers*).

For the N.E.C., R. EVANS urged delegates to appreciate the implications of their earlier decision that every branch should have the right to send a delegate to Conference. The small branch was not always the most effective. In the small area there was an intimacy between the staff and the employing authority not found in the larger areas—but that intimacy often reacted adversely on the interests of officers, especially in matters of service conditions (*hear, hear!*). Once again, Conference rejected the amendment.

"Let efficiency be test"

Then W. A. JAMES, **South Warwickshire Hospitals Group**, had a final bite at the same cherry, with an amendment suggesting that the minimum standard of 75 should be disregarded where the district service group consultative committee considered that membership of the branch under review represented a reasonable proportion of eligible officers and that the branch was functioning efficiently.

While the assurance given by the N.E.C. that it had no intention of closing down branches with fewer than 75 members had altered the complexion of what he had to say, Mr. James confessed, that assurance was not in the scheme, and something ought to be there to safeguard the position. There were 630 branches with a membership of less than 75—he had counted them at 5 o'clock that morning! (*laughter*). For those branches to be told that 75 was going to be the minimum level did not give them much idea of the ground upon which they would be allowed to continue, or would have to be discontinued. There should be some standard and guidance, so that if any branch were in danger, it could protect itself by stressing the strength of its membership and the effectiveness and efficiency of its work.

The President intervened to point out that the amendment would give a district committee the right to determine whether a branch should or should not be, and that would be contrary to the Association's rules. In view of what had already been decided and of the assurance given that no branch was to be abolished, he hoped that delegates would take the view that there was nothing to worry about until they saw the effect on their own branches of their own deliberations in their own districts.

To this R. EVANS added that the N.E.C. wanted flexibility, not rigidity—"a little local option, not too many directives," and Conference rejected the amendment.

District to decide

All further amendments on this part of the scheme were withdrawn save two. The first, from the **Eastern District**, providing that the recommendations about small branches should not take effect before a date to be fixed not earlier than January 1, 1953, and that no existing small branch should cease to function, except by recommendation of the district committee, was accepted by the N.E.C. and adopted without debate. The second, from the **Kent River Board** branch, sought an assurance that, when small branches were amalgamated, they should be of similar type. Supporting this, B. BROWN, **Preston Hall Hospital Board**, pointed out that the problem did not apply only to river boards; certain hospital branches had peculiarities that made it difficult for them to fit in with other branches—his own was a tubercular rehabilitation unit, and there might be similar examples. But R. EVANS, N.E.C., opposed on the ground that the wording of the amendment was too loose; it could mean that rural districts could only amalgamate with rural districts and urban districts with urban districts. He suggested that all such problems could be settled at district level, and Conference agreed, rejecting the amendment.

Proceeding to section 4 of the scheme, proposing the creation of "manifold" districts—i.e., districts covering appropriate but different areas for the various service groups—the N.E.C. accepted, and Conference approved, a **Metropolitan District** amendment requiring the N.E.C. to consult the branch and district committee concerned before exercising its power to assign a branch to a particular district.

Service conditions machinery

On section 5, dealing with district committees generally, E. G. BUTT, on behalf of **Croydon and West Kent Sub-Area Electricity, and South Warwickshire Hospital Group** members, moved the deletion of paragraphs (c), proposing that any service conditions agencies set up at district level for the several service groups should be appointed or elected by the district committees and responsible to them; and (d) stating that this approach was preferable to continuing the existing consultative committees and placing them in relationship to the district committee and the N.E.C. The object of the amendment, Mr. Butt explained, was to retain the consultative machinery, which had proved of real worth. But J. P. PHOENIX, opposing for the N.E.C., pointed out that its adoption would stultify the Council's proposals. They wanted to revitalise the district committees—but the amendment would revitalise them by cutting their arms off! Unless a district committee were given proper control over and proper working relationship with all the district service conditions sub-committees, it would become a hollow shell. The district committee structure was integral to the whole scheme. Conference rejected the amendment.

Election by group committees?

More revolutionary was the next amendment, by **South-West Sussex Gas Officers'** branch, to substitute for sections (c) and (d) a proposal that district service conditions committees be set up for each group of membership and that these should elect the re-formed district committee, which would be known as the district executive council.

Moving this, K. J. CUNDELL confessed that he was in an unenviable position: he had been told by his branch that he would be hanged, drawn, and quartered if he did not move the amendment; and he had been told elsewhere that he would be hanged, drawn, and quartered if he did! (*laughter*). He had nevertheless decided to move it, preferring to die in Blackpool than in Sussex! (*laughter!*)

His branch, he continued, had long considered that the district committee, under its present structure, was too large and unwieldy for effective action. The N.E.C. had now agreed that each service group should have its own service conditions committee. What useful purpose would be served by a district committee of the present size if all the talking were to be done at the service conditions committee meetings? The obvious solution, if they were going to have district service conditions committees, was for the service groups to elect them, and for the service conditions committees then to elect a district executive council to guard Association policy.

To complete the structure of the district executive council, he suggested that the chairman of each service conditions committee should be an *ex-officio* member, together with the N.E.C. members for the district.

Opposing for the N.E.C., J. P. PHOENIX contended that Conference had already settled this matter when it agreed that branches should have reasonable opportunity to express themselves. The district committee was the obvious place where branches could keep in touch with both national and district policy. They were all members one of another, and each service group was watching the others. The current salary negotiations

New service conditions set-up for groups

gave adequate proof that, for example, their friends in the gas industry were watching the other services closely and, he hoped, not jealously. Segregation on the lines suggested would not work. Conference agreed, rejecting the amendment.

Section 6, dealing with the composition and functions of district committees, proposed, *inter alia*, that the district committee should continue to appoint an honorary secretary "but, in future, he shall be provided with all necessary secretarial and clerical assistance by the Association's district office." To this, J. A. PACKER, **Brighton**, moved an amendment to substitute "may" for "shall" and to add: "upon request from the district." The object, Mr. Packer explained, was to ensure that the district committee determined policy and to leave it to those in the district to call upon the district office for help and financial support if necessary.

But R. EVANS, **N.E.C.**, opposed, arguing that adoption of the amendment would not be in the interests of branches. With the additional functions contemplated for them, district committees would need the district office staff to do the "donkey work." Conference agreed, rejecting the amendment.

More than one sub-committee?

Section 7 of the scheme dealt with the establishment in each district of a separate service conditions sub-committee for each membership group. Seventeen amendments had been tabled to this, but of these, eight were withdrawn and one failed to find a seconder, leaving eight to be debated.

First of these, moved by F. OAKDEN, **Manchester Sub-Area Electricity**, proposed that, where there was more than one joint council for a particular service, there should be more than one service conditions sub-committee. Such a provision, he argued, would simplify administration. Explaining the position in greater detail, his seconder, A. J. CARR, **Liverpool and District Electricity**, said that, in the North-Western district, there were two electricity joint councils—covering North West Merseyside and North Wales. Owing to the different set-up in each area, these bodies claimed, and had obtained, a fair amount of autonomy. Their problems varied considerably, and to meet them, NALGO had formed two consultative committees. These committees had held a joint meeting, but it had been very long because of the variety and lack of relations between the topics discussed.

As a result of the excellent machinery established, membership had increased to the point at which NALGO had 100 per cent representation on the Merseyside District Council (*cheers*). This was a unique achievement, due in no small measure to the consultative machinery, and it would be a pity to change a successful team now.

"We are not asking for anything," Mr. Carr declared. "We only ask to be left to carry on as we have been doing, and we promise that the only trouble we shall cause will be to the employers' side—and they are now becoming well used to that" (*hear, hear!*).

For the N.E.C., R. EVANS said that it was not opposed to the principle of what had been suggested, but to the method. They had to legislate broadly for the country as a whole, not for a particular district, and they were prepared to accept a later amendment (No. 275), drawn in wider terms, which would give the North Western Electricity people what they wanted. On this assurance, Conference rejected the amendment.

Method of election

Sub-paragraph (b) of the section proposed that the service conditions sub-committees should be constituted by a process of election approved by the district committee, which should be free to make limited resort to co-option of members from the appropriate service group. To this J. ROBERTSON, **Glasgow and District Health** branch, moved addition of the words: "Where there are sufficient members of the service group concerned, the election shall be by vote of the members of that group."

The object of this provision, Mr. Robertson explained, was to ensure a uniform system of electing the sub-committees. It would still be left to the district committee to decide how many members a service group must have before it could elect the service conditions sub-committee.

Seconding, R. DUNBAR said that Headquarters, in a letter to his branch, had said that the amendment expressed the spirit of the N.E.C. proposal—"but being a branch of canny Scots, we want to see the label on the bottle" (*laughter*).

R. A. WARREN, **N. E. London Electricity** branch, pointed out that, in its original proposals, the N.E.C. had suggested that the service conditions sub-committees should be elected by the members of the district committees belonging to the membership group concerned. Why had they abandoned this, leaving it to the district committee to decide the process of election?

R. EVANS, **N.E.C.**, explained that the N.E.C. wanted to avoid a hard-and-fast approach: it was satisfied that district committees could be trusted to evolve a suitable scheme. The label on the bottle was provided by amendment 275, which it would accept. Once again, Conference rejected the amendment on this assurance.

Consultative committee structure

There followed a long amendment by the **Manchester Sub-Area Electricity** branch, proposing a detailed constitution for service conditions sub-committees for members in the nationalised services on the lines of the constitution of the existing consultative committees. Moving this, F. OAKDEN said that the consultative committee had given representation to every branch and had worked well, while his seconder, E. G. BUTT, **Croydon and West Kent Electricity**, added that electricity members were merely seeking that their bread-and-butter policy should be

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discussed and formulated by a body of their own representatives.

For the N.E.C., R. EVANS assured Conference that the Council was not stopping, but was continuing, that process. The scheme was based on the principle that each service group should elect its own service conditions sub-committee on the basis that best suited its needs. Conference agreed, rejecting the amendment.

All the three remaining amendments to this section were accepted by the Council and adopted without debate. The first, by the **Metropolitan District Committee,** clarified the wording of section (f) of the scheme. The second, by **Brighton,** authorised district committees to encourage the formation of joint committees of branches in suitable areas. The third was item 275, to which reference had been made earlier in the discussion. Submitted by the **Metropolitan District Committee,** it proposed the deletion of sub-section 7 (h) of the scheme and its replacement by a section reading: "Subject to such broad directives as the Council may give, not being inconsistent with the foregoing provisions, district committees shall formulate schemes for the establishment of service conditions sub-committees and for fixing or regulating their size, election and proceedings."

"Give groups adequate voice"

Section 8 of the scheme dealt with the service conditions committee of the N.E.C. and its proposed sub-committees for each service group. Of the six amendments to this, three were withdrawn. Of the three debated, the first, by **Dartford and District Hospitals and Health Services** branch, sought to amend sub-section (a), prescribing that the N.E.C. service conditions committee should be composed of the chairman of each of the service conditions sub-committees plus sufficient N.E.C. members appointed by the Council to give them a majority and provide a total membership of 15–20, with a clause stipulating that the committee should contain, in addition to the chairman of each sub-committee, at least two members of each service group.

Moving this, R. MORGAN pointed out that, under the N.E.C. proposal it was possible for the service conditions committee to contain only one member representing each service group and ten to 15 local government officers. While not seeking functional representation, his branch considered that each service within the Association should have an adequate voice in the national service conditions committee.

For the N.E.C., E. C. R. CHINN explained that the Council's proposal was the logical expansion at national level of the district organisation already agreed. Since the national committee was primarily concerned with matters of major policy of interest to the whole Association, the degree of functional representation asked for was unnecessary. Conference agreed, rejecting the amendment.

"Let districts nominate"

Sub-section (b)(ii) of the scheme provided that each service conditions sub-committee should be composed of one member nominated by each district committee who should, if able and willing to serve, be the chairman of the district service conditions sub-committee for the membership group concerned, plus three N.E.C. members appointed by the Council. The next amendment, by **Bristol Electricity** branch, sought to amend this by deleting the reference to the chairman of the district sub-committee and introducing a proviso that the district nomination should be on the recommendation of the appropriate district sub-committee. Moving it, C. R. GIBSON claimed that it was only logical that the members of the appropriate district sub-committee should be able to nominate the man who would represent them nationally: the district committee would still have the last word. The chairman of the district service conditions sub-committee, would probably also be chairman of the staff side of the district joint council and a member of the national consultative committee, and it was not right that one person should be required to do all that.

Seconding, T. FERNLEY, **Manchester Gas,** suggested that, since the members of the district service conditions sub-committee alone knew the best men, it was right that they should recommend who should represent them and that it should be the duty of the district committee to endorse their recommendation.

For the **N.E.C.,** C. J. NEWMAN agreed, in view of what had been said, to accept the amendment, and Conference approved it, amid cheers.

Greater co-option rejected

Finally, A. J. EAGLES, **St. Helier Group Hospitals,** moved a **Metropolitan District** amendment to add to the membership of each sub-committee not more than six co-opted members "with a view to securing adequate functional representation." This was particularly necessary in the health service, Mr. Eagles explained, since there they had nine separate functional groups, each of which should be represented.

For the **N.E.C.,** E. C. R. CHINN suggested that, by accepting the previous amendment, the N.E.C. had gone a long way to meet what was asked. It could not go any further. Conference agreed, rejecting the amendment.

Section 9 of the scheme dealt with the appointment of staff sides of Whitley Councils. In respect of the staff side of a National Joint Council, it provided that seats to be filled by representatives of the staff sides of regional or provincial councils should be filled from the membership of the appropriate district service conditions sub-committee, and that all other NALGO seats should be filled by the N.E.C. and comprise: at least one and not more than three N.E.C. members appointed to the appropriate N.E.C. service conditions sub-committee; officers of the Association; and other members of the appropriate N.E.C. service conditions sub-committee, whether members of the Council or not.

Of the seven amendments to this section, most were concerned with this proposal, and at the outset of the debate, J. P. PHOENIX made from the platform a suggestion which might, he thought, save time. The Council, he said, was prepared to amend sub-section (b) (ii) to read: "As to all other seats, the NALGO members of the staff side of each National Joint Council shall be appointed by the National Executive Council in consultation with the national service conditions sub-committee." This, he suggested, would be more in conformity with the principle of making the scheme flexible and would overcome the difficulties raised in the amendments.

Present practice preferred

Delegates were invited to consider this suggestion during the lunch interval, and when Conference resumed five of the amendments were withdrawn. But **Glasgow** and **Manchester Gas** branches were unwilling to withdraw their amendment, proposing that the staff side seats should be filled, not by the N.E.C., but by the appropriate service conditions sub-committee.

Moving this, T. FERNLEY, while agreeing that the N.E.C. had gone a long way towards satisfying their requirements, hoped that it would go a little further. The amendment asked merely for continuance of the present practice. In the gas service, the NALGO representatives appointed to the National Joint Council were recommended to the N.E.C. by the National Consultative Committee, and the N.E.C. accepted the recommendations. The amendment asked that the service conditions sub-committee should recommend to the N.E.C. those to be appointed and that the N.E.C. should accept them or, if there were urgent reason, reduce them.

The President intervened to point out that, on his interpretation, the amendment involved deletion of the words "appointed by the National Executive Council." The N.E.C. had already agreed that it would consider the nominations of the national service conditions sub-committees.

Mr. Fernley agreed that his proposal

Big reserves needed "to make NALGO strong"

was almost the same as that of the N.E.C. All he wanted was to ensure that the representatives were appointed on the recommendation of the service conditions sub-committee. There was agreement in substance, but his branch would be absolutely satisfied if the N.E.C. would agree to the amendment.

For the **N.E.C.,** J. P. PHOENIX suggested that Mr. Fernley was afraid that the N.E.C. would not take enough notice of the service conditions sub-committee—though, coming from Manchester, he put it more politely than that (*laughter*). But he had overlooked the fact that some of the staff side representatives were paid officers of the Association. It would be altogether wrong if those officers became "directees"—to use a Government expression—of the various sub-committees. They were answerable to the General Secretary, who in turn was answerable to the N.E.C., and it was for that reason, among others, that the N.E.C. asked that it should control appointments to the staff side. At the same time, it gave an assurance that every recommendation made by the service conditions sub-committees would be carefully considered, and it would probably be only in respect of officers that the General Secretary might wish at times to intervene, though it would be rarely that he would wish to do so.

Asked by the President whether he was satisfied, Mr. Fernley agreed that there was no real difference between his proposal and that of the N.E.C., and he would therefore leave the matter for Conference to decide. Conference did, rejecting the amendment and adopting the N.E.C. amendment.

Powers of staff sides

Section 10 of the Scheme dealt with the relationship of staff sides of Whitley Councils to the Association's service conditions machinery. It provided, *inter alia*, that provincial or regional staff sides should conform to directions of the N.E.C., should not deal with matters outside the functions of the provincial council, and, *before initiating any movement in a provincial council for recommendation to the National Joint Council, should report the proposals to the district committee.* There was one amendment to this, a proposal by the **Yorkshire District** to delete the final clause, summarised in italics above.

Before this was moved, J. P. PHOENIX suggested that substitution of the word "policy" for "movement" might meet the purpose of the amendment. R. E. SNOWDEN, **Yorkshire No. 2 Sub-Area Electricity,** agreed that it would. The object of the amendment was to avoid "gumming up the works" of the Whitley machinery. Certain electricity sub-areas and districts were threatened with reorganisation; and they wanted to be able to deal with such threats quickly, without having first to refer to the district committee. Conference approved the N.E.C. amendment and Mr. Snowden withdrew his.

"Aid education work"

Section 12 of the Scheme dealt with finance, and to this two amendments were moved. The first was on sub-section (e) providing that the Association's holiday centres, private hotels, correspondence institute, and other trading activities, should be conducted on a self-supporting basis without charge on the revenues raised by subscription, and the amendment proposed deletion of the reference to the correspondence institute. Moving it R. MORGAN, **Dartford and District Hospitals and Health Services,** complained that NALGO seemed today to pay less attention than formerly to the education of its young members. If the sub-section were adopted as it stood, the Association would be unable to subsidise the cost of its correspondence courses—yet, in these days of rising prices, the cost of those courses might rise to the point when young people would be unable to pay for them. While he did not suggest a subsidy now, he did want to leave the way open for one should it prove necessary.

R. Morgan

Seconding, E. ALDERTON, **Kent County,** suggested that the refusal to subsidise the Association's education work was out of key with national sentiment, as typified in the 1944 Education Act, which implied that no child should be deprived of any form of education through lack of funds.

"If you wish to enhance the status of your service and to call it a profession," he said, "then I think you ought to go further than my colleague suggested and subsidise it. If the correspondence courses do prove to be self-supporting, well and good—somebody has done a very good job. But if they do not, then Conference should be ready to help them, because they are important."

For the **N.E.C.,** J. H. ROBINSON, said the issue was simply whether the general funds of the Association should be used for the benefit of a minority. The education committee, the best judge, had itself recommended that an attempt should be made to make the correspondence institute self-supporting. There was no evidence that any student had been handicapped; indeed, the figures showed that more students were taking NALGO courses. Accepting this statement, Conference rejected the amendment.

Next, C. R. SANDELL, **Pembroke and district,** moved to amend sub-section (f), reading: "subscriptions shall continue to be raised by a graduated scale based on salary . . ." by substituting "levied" for "raised by." The use of the word "raised," he said, aroused his suspicions. Subscriptions had been raised in the past; they were apparently going to be raised at this Conference; and they would doubtless be raised in the future—but to say that they were going to continue to be raised seemed a bit thick! It would be nice to look forward to a possible drop sometime.

For the **N.E.C.,** J. H. ROBINSON said that obviously it was not the intention to provide for continually rising subscriptions. He gathered that what was meant by the amendment was purity of language; and anything that contributed to the purity of the N.E.C. it would, of course, accept! (*laughter*).

FINANCIAL REORGANISATION

"Milestone of progress"

Conference approved the amendment and, on this more lighthearted note, having adopted the full scheme as amended, turned to the supplementary scheme for the reorganisation of the Association's finances.

Introducing this, J. H. ROBINSON, **N.E.C.,** recalled the warning he had given when presenting the accounts that a large union was not necessarily a strong one; and the unanimous decision of the Eastbourne Conference to strengthen the Association's finances, so that NALGO could claim to be not only the largest black-coated workers' union, but the strongest.

They now had to consider the ways and means. This was one of the most important matters before Conference, and might prove to be a milestone of NALGO's progress. The major task was to begin, without delay, the accumulation of a substantial reserve fund. If any of their other decisions needed improvement or modification in the light of experience, there would be a time and place to make those changes. "But if the reserve fund is not there when you want it, nothing then will help you. All you will be able to say is 'What a pity we did not start before!'"

The scheme, Mr. Robinson continued, was the culmination of two years' work involving much careful thought and expert investigation. In that work, the Council had been faced with two limitations: the assurance given to Conference a year ago that branches and districts would be no worse off financially; and the fact that it had no mandate for a serious departure from the financial relationship between Headquarters and districts and branches. It should not be assumed that, without those limitations, the N.E.C. would have produced some magical formula or financial wizardry

that would have solved all the financial problems without extra cost. The old methods had produced financially sound branches and well-provided districts, so that, at those levels, NALGO's work had never been impeded by lack of resources. The fact that this financial structure had not produced adequate resources at national level might be because the increase in income due to increased membership had been accompanied by increasing expenditure bearing little relationship with that large growth. That deficiency was being rectified by the proposals now before Conference.

New subscription rates

The financial scheme followed the existing pattern which was, he thought, both popular and administratively convenient. But there were changes. It was recommended, for example, that, in future, the amount of subscription payable should be based on grade, rather than on arbitrary income ranges: this would simplify administration. The revised proposals, amended to bring them into line with the recent local government salaries award, provided for five scales:

Annual salary	*Annual subscription*
Up to £280	20s.
£280—£440	30s.
£440—£550	40s.
£550—£1,000	50s.
Over £1,000	60s.

It would be noticed that the difference between one scale and the next was 10s. a year, equivalent to 2d. a week, the price of one cigarette. "None of you would not give a cigarette to a friend," Mr. Robinson commented. "Do you begrudge an extra 2d. for NALGO?"

It was proposed that the subscription should be payable in ten equal monthly instalments, collected in the first ten months of the Association's year, Conference having the right to decide whether fewer or more monthly instalments should be payable during the succeeding year. He hoped that delegates would not be disturbed by this suggestion. Its object was to provide for some elasticity without having to recast the scales frequently. But the Council was leaving this power to Conference, and if it were necessary to extend the ten-month period, Conference would have to approve and be satisfied that the reasons were good and necessary.

"Foundations for greatness"

The allocation to branches, after deduction of the £50,000 for reserve, would be about the same as now, while districts would get a little more according to needs. The reserve fund itself was so hedged round by restrictions that it could be used only for the purposes the Council had had in mind.

"If, at the end of this Conference," Mr. Robinson concluded, "I could see the foundation of this fund, I personally would think that the time I have spent in NALGO has not been spent in vain. You are truly laying the foundation stone for your future greatness. You are working for a bigger and stronger NALGO. Whilst we give our loyal duties to the public, we claim our rights. We are its servants, not its slaves, and we will continue to do good for all so long as they do no ill to us.

"Let us to our task then. The flighty purpose Ne'er is overtook unless the deed go with it."

£500,000 too much?

First challenge to the scheme came in a **Herefordshire** amendment condemning it as "unsatisfactory" and calling for its reference back. Moving this in a clear and well-delivered speech, J. DONALDSON argued that the Eastbourne Conference had not, as the N.E.C. claimed, "provisionally accepted" the recommendation to accumulate a £500,000 reserve fund in ten years; it had merely said that consideration of the scheme should be deferred and that, when the financial section was presented to the 1951 Conference, it should be accompanied by recommendations for the detailed working of the scheme. The Council's report was so lacking in facts that it could only be described as a blurb. The proposed special reserve fund of £500,000 was to be additional to the present general reserve of over £150,000 and the hidden reserve in branch hands, which the N.E.C. believed to be £200,000. It might have been expected that, for a proposal of such magnitude, adequate, detailed estimates would have been produced. That had not been done—nor had the N.E.C. said a word to show why it had fixed on £500,000, rather than on £5,000 or £5,000,000. Why?

The report said that the Association had met its current commitments "with a small surplus during the last year or two." In fact, the surpluses over the past three years totalled more than £43,000—more than 8¼ per cent of the net income from subscriptions. Surely that was a fair profit from any class of business, including a trade union.

Income increasing

The report went on to say that, whereas the benefit of the influx of new members was felt fairly quickly, the cost of the work and machinery necessary to deal with them made its full impact later. That could only be described as a terminological inexactitude. Mr. Robinson was too experienced an accountant not to know that the only fair basis of calculation was the unit cost. The annual cost of running NALGO per head of membership had gone up by 2d. in the past three years, but the net income per head had gone up by 1s. 1d. in the same period, and would increase every year.

Moreover, the expenditure in 1950 had included £4,400 of the cost of the salaries campaign. That had been money well spent, if only in NALGO's own interests, since the pay increases obtained would bring it an addition of more than £20,000 a year at the existing rates of subscription.

The report gave only three reasons for establishing a special reserve fund. The first was the inadequacy of present liquid reserves. But did it say what the N.E.C. considered to be adequate reserves? No—that also was for Conference to guess.

The second reason was that the Association had to be in a position to deal with any major crisis. But what, in terms of £ s. d., would a major crisis cost? The salaries campaign, one of the greatest all-out efforts NALGO had ever made, had cost, in all, just over £5,000. That was only one-hundredth part of the contemplated reserve, and it had been met from current revenue.

The third reason was that the Association had no central freehold premises. That was a typical N.E.C. red herring. Mr. Robinson himself had said at the Eastbourne Conference: "I have never had at the back of my mind the thought that this fund was for new offices."

"Staggering" increases

His branch considered, Mr. Donaldson continued, that the proposal to collect subscriptions in ten monthly instalments instead of twelve was a psychological blunder and would merely aggravate the difficulty of collection. The N.E.C.'s revised proposals on the scale of subscriptions had been circulated to branch secretaries only a week before Conference. These proposals affected every member—but how many branches had been able to study them? They were still full of anomalies, and branches should have the right to veto them.

It was staggering to see that it was proposed to increase the subscription of the officers earning under £120 a year from 13s. to £1 a year. Admittedly, there were few members in that category, but most county branches had some part-time officers. NALGO had always stood for the defence of the weak, but this was plundering the poor. The increases at other levels were much too high. Many of those who would have to pay them had heavy professional fees in addition.

Herefordshire, Mr. Donaldson concluded, did not condemn the scheme out-of-hand. But it asked that it should be reconsidered, not only by the N.E.C., but by branches, with detailed estimates before them. In its present form, the scheme would greatly retard recruiting, and there was a strong possibility that some present members would leave the Association, while the Benevolent and Orphan Fund would suffer drastically.

"Members unable to pay"

Seconding, H. R. L. STRAWBRIDGE, **Margate**, said that NALGO's growth and expansion had been largely due to its ability to provide negotiating facilities recognised by all local authorities, unrivalled legal advice and help, and an educational service renowned for its high standard, at a subscription rate within the power of its members to pay, whatever their salaries.

During the recent salaries campaign frequent reference had been made to the financial strain on the local government officer. He had examined the personal statements submitted by his own members

in support of the campaign. The poverty and suffering revealed in those statements had been deplorable. To these members, many of whom had to undertake additional part-time employment to provide for their families the bare necessities of life, the proposal to raise subscriptions was of the highest importance.

Conference had called for stabilisation of prices. It had heard Mr. Harrold expounding the case against higher superannuation contributions. Yet, now, the N.E.C. called upon a harassed and overburdened membership to pour more money into its coffers to meet an unknown or unspecified contingency.

Conference should refuse to allow the membership to become a milch cow to provide for some vague circumstances which might arise in the distant future.

"More facts needed"

L. A. BAILEY, **Hackney**, supporting, said it was not enough to ask delegates to go back to their branches and say: "We are starting this reserve fund but we don't know why." Nor was it enough for the honorary treasurer to say: "I'm honest John Robinson. You can take it from me." Delegates wanted facts and figures to demonstrate the need for the reserve fund. If it was for strike action—he was not suggesting it—then they should know.

In his own branch last year, as the result of a difference between the local authority and NALGO Headquarters, some members had created an officers' branch of the National Union of Public Employees. He was doing his best to keep members in NALGO, but unless he could show that something concrete was being offered in return for the increase in subscriptions, his branch, and others, must expect further defections.

There was the further problem of dual membership. He was a registration officer and had to belong to his appropriate organisation. That meant two subscriptions. There were many other members in a similar position with sectional and professional societies, and the payment of two subscriptions hit their pockets.

Poverty cry "nonsense"

Support for the N.E.C. came from A. F. ENSOR, **Brighton.** Only the previous day, he pointed out, Bristol had suggested higher superannuation contributions as a means of getting better benefits—and many delegates had agreed with it. Now, Conference was asked to agree to higher subscriptions to produce a reserve fund which the honorary treasurer—and if he did not know about finance, who did?—said was essential for a body with an annual appropriation approaching £300,000. Was it seriously suggested that a member earning £5 a week could not afford a subscription of 6d., or that one earning about £8 a week could not afford 9d.? The amendment was nonsense, and Conference should make up its mind now (*cheers*).

For the N.E.C., C. J. NEWMAN was content to remind Conference that it had itself, a year ago, called for the report now before it, in full knowledge of the proposal to build up a £500,000 reserve fund over ten years. "You may quarrel with the details of how we propose to do that," he added, "but do not let us make complete fools of ourselves by referring the whole thing back again for 12 months after you yourself have insisted that this report should be brought before you."

C. R. GIBSON, **Bristol Electricity**, also opposing the amendment, commented, amid laughter, that it was the first time a Bristol Electricity delegate had flown to the defence of the N.E.C. The supporters of the amendment, he said, were defeatist and negative. To urge that NALGO should not ask for increased subscriptions because its members were poor was a negative approach: the positive approach

"Flown to the defence of the N.E.C."

was to say that, if members were in poverty, it was the Association's duty to do something about it—and to give it the necessary resources (*cheers*). In his own branch, there had been that same attitude of: "Dare we ask our members for more money?" But those attending Conference were supposed to be giving a lead. They should go back to their branches and say: "You are getting the service and NALGO is on the job. We need more money to do the job properly" (*cheers*).

A. S. BUTCHER, **North Metropolitan Electricity**, expressed amazement at the pleas which had been made for the downtrodden, underpaid, starving workers (*laughter*). Mr. Robinson had told them that the increase would be less than the cost of a "fag" a week. Let Conference support the increases and stop squabbling over 2d. (*cheers*).

By this time, Conference was satisfied, and rejected the amendment by an overwhelming majority.

But **Hackney** was not willing to abandon its struggle, and Mr. Bailey returned to the microphone with a further amendment, inviting Conference to adjourn consideration of the financial scheme until it had been given detailed reasons and estimates to show conclusively the need for the proposed reserve fund. He was not concerned, he said, about the odd 2d. that was going to be taken out of members' pockets: he merely wanted to know for what purpose it was going to be used.

R. W. ILEY, **Sunderland Gas,** speaking as a former company officer who had been in NALGO for only three years, expressed astonishment that delegates should quibble over such matters. Members, he suggested, were conscious of the prestige of NALGO; regarded it as a professional association to which they were proud to belong. It had certainly done much for gas staffs (*cheers*). Mr. Robinson had told them why the money was needed. NALGO members today were getting a square deal, and they ought to pay for it. The private company staffs would be glad to back the N.E.C. in this matter (*cheers*).

Also opposing, S. ROWAN, **Durham county,** suggested that, if Mr. Bailey wanted to know what the reserve fund was for, it should be sufficient for him to repeat the name of his branch—Durham county (*hear, hear!*). "If you think of that," he added, "you will not press the question why NALGO needs a reserve fund."

Delegates saw the point and rejected the amendment by an overwhelming majority.

Manchester "raid" repulsed

Turning from the general to the particular, T. C. BARTON, **Manchester,** moved an amendment to extend the period during which the reserve fund is to be accumulated from ten to 12 years, and to reduce the annual amount set aside from £50,000 to £42,000. This, he explained with engaging frankness, was linked with a later Manchester amendment seeking to increase the proportion of subscriptions retained by branches which maintain a permanent office and paid staff. Since Manchester did not want to cut Headquarters' share of income, nor to reduce that of other branches, the reserve fund was the only thing left to raid. Adoption of the amendment would provide another £8,000 a year to meet the needs of branches with special problems, while allowing the reserve to reach £420,000 in ten years—plus many thousands in interest—and to £504,000 in 12 years, plus accumulated interest—more than the N.E.C. had asked.

But Mr. Robinson would have none of it. "I pay tribute to the sincerity of the speakers but, by Heavens, they do get off the track," he commented, amid laughter. £500,000 was a target figure—but who could tell whether they would not have to use it within the ten years? Conference had fixed the ten-year period a year ago. This amendment was not the place to discuss whether or not there should be paid assistance to branches. Conference agreed, rejecting the amendment.

W. H. LUCKETT, **Oxford,** followed with an amendment to replace the proposed annual contribution of £50,000 to the reserve fund with an annual allocation of 15 per cent of gross subscription income. His branch's view, he explained, was that the contribution to the reserve fund should be related to the Association's income, growing as the income grew. But Conference would not agree, rejecting the amendment without discussion.

MICROPHONE MOODS

Don't look now, but . . .

. . . I think we're being followed . . .

. . . by a sleep talker . .

. . . who means business !

After **Essex County,** through A. E. KAY, had announced that, since delegates were apparently willing to accept higher subscriptions, it did not propose to move its batch of 12 amendments which, together, provided an alternative scheme, F. W. GRANT, **North Northants,** moved an amendment providing for the reserve fund to be accumulated "as soon as possible," with ten years as a maximum period and £50,000 as a minimum annual contribution, and specifying that the use of the fund be limited by rules. His object, he explained, was to introduce a note of greater urgency. The reserve fund was long overdue, and every effort—including sacrifices by branches and district committees, as well as by individual members—should be made to build it up in less than ten years. "God forbid that we should ever have to use it," Mr. Grant concluded, "but God help us if we have not got it when we need it !"

But, though welcoming the sense of urgency, J. H. ROBINSON, **N.E.C.,** advised Conference to stick to the ten-year plan at the moment. Nor should they vary the amount allocated to the fund each year: it would increase the difficulties of branch treasurers. Conference agreed, rejecting the amendment.

Big branches' costs

This brought Manchester to the amendment Mr. Barton had mentioned earlier. It proposed that branches with a membership exceeding 1,200 and which maintain a permanent office and a full-time paid staff should be allowed to retain for their own use, not the 28⅜ per cent of gross subscription income proposed to be retained by most branches, but the 32½ per cent which it was proposed to give only to county and "scattered area" branches. This plea was based, Mr. Barton explained, on sheer economic necessity. His own branch, with staffs spread over two big buildings and many scattered outposts, simply had to have an office to cope with the duplication of circulars, correspondence, the collection of subscriptions, and the keeping of records. The cost of all this was additional to the normal branch expenditure met out of subscription income. Adoption of the amendment would affect only eight branches with more than 1,200 members, while a further six, with between 1,000 and 1,200, might qualify later. The total cost would be about £2,000 a year.

Supporting from **Liverpool,** W. RANKIN urged that, notwithstanding the claim made earlier that the small branches were the backbone of NALGO, the big branches had their uses. His own experience was that it was impossible to carry on without a paid staff.

After further support from N. PORTER, **Essex County,** who, though representing one of the fortunate county branches already getting the 32½ per cent rebate, confessed that it could not afford a permanent staff, W. ROWLANDS opposed for the **N.E.C.** He did not, he explained, disagree with the claims of the big branches, but contended that their problem could be solved by clause 10(c) of the Association's rules, which allowed the N.E.C. to give assistance from national funds to any branch in financial difficulties. An inquiry made by the N.E.C. last year had shown that, with few exceptions, present branch income was enough to cover all essential trade union purposes, even in branches with paid staffs. He therefore asked Conference to reject the amendment as being unfair to other branches and tending to discount voluntary effort and help. Conference agreed, rejecting the amendment.

"Cut Headquarters' expenses"

There followed another attack on the proposed increase in the name of **South-Western Electricity H.Q.,** urging that, as an alternative to raising subscriptions—a step which was "bound to lead to fairly widespread resignations", the N.E.C. should explore the possibility of reducing by £50,000 the "extremely disproportionate" sum of £170,000 estimated as the cost of running Headquarters.

By this time, with the clock approaching 4.15—the time fixed for adjournment—and many amendments still unconsidered, delegates had grown impatient, and the mover of the amendment, A. L. HODGES, was content to let it speak for itself. Equally shortly, J. H. ROBINSON, **N.E.C.,** secured its rejection by expressing doubt whether higher subscriptions would, in fact, lead to "fairly widespread resignations," vainly challenging Mr. Hodges to tell him how Headquarters was to cut its costs by £50,000, and confessing that, though he had burned much midnight oil on the problem, he had himself failed to find any appreciable savings.

Next, L. T. SAUNDERS, **Middlesex,** formally moved that subscriptions continue to be based on the salary actually being received on November 1 each year, rather than, as the N.E.C. proposed, on particular grades in the Charter.

For the **N.E.C.,** G. T. BELTON explained that the revised subscription scales had been recommended because they would generally be more convenient. No longer would branch collectors and treasurers have the difficult task they had before the salaries award of explaining to the woman who had just reached the maximum of the Clerical Division at £352 a year that she had gone into a new subscription scale, starting at £350, and would have to pay another seven shillings a year. It was surely better to be able to tell a member that his subscription would not change until he was regraded. Conference agreed, emphatically rejecting the amendment

Flat-rate subscription ?

It was now time for adjournment but on a motion from the floor, delegates agreed to carry on for another 45 minutes in the hope of getting through the rest of the adaptation amendments. Having approved without discussion a **Middlesex County** amendment to exclude "weighting" from the salary upon which subscription rates are based, Conference turned to a **Leeds** amendment calling for a flat-rate subscription, in place of the proposed scales, with a lower rate for officers under 21. Moving this, P. P. MURPHY said that many considered the grading of subscription according to salary anti-

quated, undemocratic, and unsuitable. Under the Leeds plan, were every member over 21 to pay a flat-rate subscription of 35s. a year, it would produce £350,000 a year—whereas the N.E.C. scheme would produce £336,000. For most of the members in the General Division this would mean paying only 5s. a year more than the N.E.C. proposed, while, if they were to admit 20,000 juniors without subscription, they would still have £315,000—only £20,000 less than the N.E.C. wanted.

Supporting, F. FLINT, **Kirkby in Ashfield,** pointed out that, in most other unions, juniors paid less than they did in NALGO, while D. C. MARR, **Leeds,** suggested that acceptance of the amendment would prevent a lot of haggling about the precise amounts of subscription to be levied on the various grades. Adoption of a flat rate would simplify collection of subscriptions. Since every member was entitled to the same benefits and help, then subscriptions should be the same.

For the **N.E.C.,** G. T. BELTON pointed out that, a year ago, Conference had instructed the N.E.C. to give preference to those in the lower ranges. That had been done. How many delegates could go back now and convince their branches that they had authority to adopt this proposal, which involved higher subscriptions for many in the General Division and a major change in organisation? Evidently not many, since Conference firmly rejected the amendment.

New subscriptions "terrifying"

Next, R. A. DAVIES, **L.C.C.,** moved an amendment suggesting that the proposed subscription scale was "unnecessarily high" and would increase the difficulties of recruitment, and instructing the N.E.C. to bring forward next year a scale embodying more moderate increases, particularly for members in the lower grades. While it might be reasonable, he said, to expect a member earning more than £1,000 a year to pay a subscription of 60s., the proposed rates were "terrifying" to the lower-grade members, and in the L.C.C. branch would make recruitment more difficult than ever.

But, for the **N.E.C.,** C. J. NEWMAN firmly rejected reference back—"the same old story." Why not get on with things? Conference, by now thoroughly weary and anxious both to get on and get out, agreed, rejecting the amendment.

It was not yet through with subscriptions, however, and, though most of the following amendments were withdrawn, had to consider two—from **Devon** and **Willesden**—proposing different variations of the scales. Both these, however, were rejected, after G. T. BELTON, **N.E.C.,** had explained that they would fail to provide the necessary income.

Ten-month plan rejected

More successful was E. G. BUTT, **Croydon and West Kent Sub-Area Electricity,** who challenged the N.E.C. proposal to collect subscriptions in ten equal instalments for the first ten months of the year, leaving it to Conference to decide whether fewer or more instalments should be paid in the following year. Moving that the subscription be payable in twelve equal monthly instalments (or in a lump sum in advance), Mr. Butt asked whether Mr. Robinson appreciated the torment which the N.E.C. plan would give to departmental collectors. Members, too, had difficulty in budgeting, and wanted to know whether they were expected to pay nine, ten, or eleven monthly instalments. Moreover, some branches had made arrangements through their local authorities for subscriptions to be deducted from salary, and adoption of the ten-months plan might cause borough treasurers to refuse to operate these schemes.

For the **N.E.C.,** G. T. BELTON said that its opinion—and some of its members were former branch treasurers and departmental collectors—was that the proposal would be of advantage to branch treasurers, giving them time to deal with their accounts. But loud cries of "No!" greeted this statement, and it seemed clear that Conference was determined to have nothing to do with the ten-months plan—whereupon both Mr. Belton and Mr. Robinson, having already won most of the day, gave way gracefully and Conference adopted the amendment by an overwhelming majority.

This concluded consideration of the financial section of the Adaptation Report, which was formally adopted, as amended. There remained, however, five amendments to the Association's rules, giving effect to the decisions of principle already reached. The first of these, on the reserve fund, included a clause requiring the N.E.C., should it have reason to use the reserve fund, to tell members of the fact and the amount it proposed to use, "unless any question of policy or the interests of members should make such a course undesirable, in which event the Council shall report accordingly to the next Annual Conference." This was challenged by W. W. J. ROGERS, **Ipswich,** who moved deletion of the clause quoted above. He could see no reason, he explained, why members should not know immediately where and why the reserve fund was spent. While appreciating that the money might have to be spent quickly and without the authority of Conference, he could not see why it was necessary to wait until the next Conference before members could criticise the action taken. It might be important for it to be criticised immediately, to prevent the N.E.C. doing the same thing again within a month or so.

For the **N.E.C.,** J. H. ROBINSON suggested that there might be occasions when, in the interests of members themselves, secrecy was necessary. Delegates should trust the N.E.C. and not, by deleting the clause, do something which they might later regret. Conference agreed, rejecting the amendment.

Full reports promised

On the same proposed rule, M. PLISKIN, **Stepney,** moved deletion of the words "report accordingly to the next Annual Conference," and their replacement by a more specific direction requiring the N.E.C. to give to Conference "full information as to the reason for use, and the amount used or to be used," if necessary in private session. He was puzzled, he explained, by the expression "report accordingly." What did it mean? It meant, said Mr. Robinson, giving full details to Conference—"as

Hark! What is that dulcet tone? . . .

Surely the song the sirens sang . . .

Close your ears, boys—'tis only . . .

Manchester Oliver asking for more!

No immediate change in Association's name

was always done"—and delegates accepted the assurance, rejecting the amendment.

Branch costs rising

One final short debate remained. This arose on the proposed new rule covering the decisions reached on subscriptions, to which **Blackpool** had tabled an amendment to increase the rebate to branches from 28⅛ to 35 per cent. Moving this, R. LAMBERT complained that, notwithstanding the N.E.C.'s assurance that the new proposals would leave no branch worse off than it was under the present arrangements, Blackpool would in fact be £43 worse off. The report had drawn attention to the continuing increase in Headquarters' expenses because of rising prices; but branch expenditure on stationery, printing, and clerical assistance was rising too. Conference had urged branches to pursue a more vigorous public relations programme. That cost money. They were encouraged to publish branch magazines—but lack of money deterred most from doing that. The N.E.C. had suggested that most branches were well off; but, in his view, any branch that was well off today must be dormant. While not disputing the need for a reserve fund, Mr. Lambert suggested that economies could be made in other directions—possibly, for example, in the provision of freehold Headquarters for the Association.

"It is often said," he concluded amid cheers, "that the local branch is the life blood of NALGO. Reduce the finance to branches and you stop the blood flowing and the whole structure falls to the ground."

Replying for the N.E.C., W. ROWLANDS said that, after Blackpool's magnificent hospitality during Conference week, it was difficult to oppose this amendment, but it had to be done. The effect of the proposal would be to give county and scattered area branches less than other branches—a reversal of the practice of many years—and to increase the total branch allocation from £105,000 to £125,000 a year. The answer to Blackpool, as he had said earlier in respect of Manchester, lay in rule 10(c) providing for special assistance for branches in need.

Though Mr. Lambert's appeal had won some support from delegates, they rejected the amendment and, at 5.5 p.m. adjourned until Friday, leaving the last stages of the adaptation report to be concluded then.

Council's size "frozen"

Friday dawned bright and fresh and delegates, forgetting the often wearisome activity of the preceding four days, responded to its influence to provide the fullest and liveliest session of the week. All amendments to the remaining motions in adaptation were withdrawn and, within the first ten minutes, Conference had approved N.E.C. motions fixing the rebate of subscription income to district committees; "freezing" the size of the N.E.C. at its present level; and empowering the Council to fix the basis of representation to the 1952 Conference, pending the submission next year of new rules giving effect to the decisions on these matters the previous day. It was then free—with 320 minutes left—to consider the 173 items remaining on the agenda.

TITLE MISLEADING?

"A handicap to recruiting"

Of these, motions seeking to amend the rules were given priority. They opened with an earnest and eloquent appeal from representatives of the nationalised services that the Association should change its name to "National and Local Government Officers' Association," retaining the short title of "NALGO." Moving this, A. J. EAGLES, **St. Helier Group Hospital,** confessed that, after more than 20 years in NALGO, he had come to appreciate the value of its name and would not lightly suggest a change. But it had become increasingly apparent over the past four years that the name did not represent the scope of present membership. In local government, the name "NALGO" was well-known, appreciated, and honoured. But in the health service, where he now had the task of recruiting from the staffs of former voluntary hospitals, his potential members had never heard of NALGO, and when they did it was difficult to convince them that it was the appropriate union for them. In the health service, the name was proving a handicap, not only in recruiting members but in dealing with employers. It had proved difficult to persuade them to give facilities for meetings and propaganda. His suggested alternative would retain the familiar initials, which nobody wanted to change. It might be criticised on the ground that "national" was too wide, and could include the civil service, but he was sure that the rules would make it clear that no civil servant could be admitted to membership. A change of name was urgently needed to assist recruitment in the health services, where the Association lacked a majority on the various Whitley Councils.

Service groups not agreed

Although delegates applauded this appeal, it was soon evident that those from the nationalised services were not of one mind about it. K. J. CUNDELL, **South West Sussex Gas,** came to the microphone with an amendment to substitute "Nationalised Authorities" for "National." Use of the latter word, he said, suggested that he and his colleagues had become national government officers—a hateful thought (*laughter*). The industries might have been born of the central government, but they had been farmed out to foster parents at a very early age. But he agreed that a change was necessary—and the N.E.C., which had been considering it for three years, had had time enough.

H. HARTLEY, **Manchester Gas,** seconded the amendment, but killed both it and the motion in the process. He was seconding, he told Conference, solely to enable his colleague, who was a lone delegate, to go back to West Sussex with a clear conscience. "But I and my branch have no qualms whatever," he added. "We are not concerned with the title of the Association; what we are concerned with is the work the Association does."

A. K. HADFIELD, **N.E. Essex Hospital Services,** agreed that all were concerned with what the Association did. Nevertheless, Conference should help those who were trying to recruit members, especially from among the staffs of the voluntary and teaching hospitals, who either had no idea what trade unionism was or were opposed to any association concerned with local government.

"Alternatives no better"

E. G. BUTT, **Croydon and West Kent Electricity,** also supporting the motion, declared, in ringing tones:

"Three years ago we were glad when you decided to recruit members from the nationalised services. We are glad to be in partnership with you. We know that if it were not for NALGO we should not have the superannuation scheme nor the salary agreement we now enjoy. When a firm is a partnership, its title and its notepaper usually indicate the fact. We, as junior partners in this firm of ours, are asking you to change your notepaper. Will you give us this concession?"

After further speeches supporting the motion against the amendment, C. J. NEWMAN, on behalf of the N.E.C. opposed both. The Council, he said, was as conscious as those who had spoken of the inadequacy and inaccuracy of the present title. But the alternatives suggested were no better. The Association did not cater for national officers, nor for officers of all nationalised authorities. Was there really so much in the argument that NALGO could not get on with its job with its present title? Surely the one thing about which all were agreed was that the word "NALGO" must be kept. The N.E.C. suggested waiting a bit longer before changing to a title that could be no more accurate than the present one.

Further review this year

Conference rejected the amendment, but before it voted on the motion, Mr. Eagles claimed a final word.

"This has been delayed too long," he said. "The N.E.C. has no other proposal, and after four years' careful thought it is no nearer a better title. 'National and Local Government Officers' Association' would be more accurate than the present one.

N.E.C. urged to lead the fight for equal pay

Hardly anybody in local government would notice the difference, but it would make a big difference to those of us in the nationalised industries."

The loud cheers which greeted this appeal showed that Mr. Eagles had the sympathy of Conference, and a show of hands gave 634 votes for the motion and 463 against. This was, however, short of the two-thirds majority necessary to approve a change of rule. A card vote was demanded, but this, too, with 105,030 votes in favour and 61,820 against, failed to give the needed majority, though by only 6,000. Delegates warmly approved, however, when the President announced that, in view of the vote, the N.E.C. would probably consider the question again during the coming year.

Three further amendments to rule were approved unanimously without debate. The first, on an N.E.C. motion, redefined "local government officer" for Association purposes as "an employee whose duties are wholly or mainly administrative, professional, technical, clerical, or supervisory, and whose employment is not by way of manual labour." The second, on a motion by **Metropolitan District** and **Wandsworth,** amended Rule 42, in such a way as to prevent "plumping" in N.E.C. elections by requiring each member to record as many votes as there are members of the council to be elected for his electoral area or district, but not to record more than one vote for any candidate.

Penny a week for B. and O.

The third, on an N.E.C. motion, increased the fee for life membership of the Benevolent and Orphan Fund from £2 2s. to £3 3s., and the minimum monthly subscription to the Fund from 3d. to 4d.

To the last, however, J. J. LIGHTOWLER, **Bradford,** moved an amendment, the effect of which would have limited benefits from the Fund to those who had been members of it for a qualifying period of six months. Its object, he explained, was to prevent members joining only when they knew they were likely to need assistance. But, though sympathising with this object, Conference rejected it when W. F. APPLETON, N.E.C., pointed out that the Fund had never restricted its benefits to those who supported it.

Three amendments to the rules of the NALGO staff superannuation fund were approved unanimously, and Conference returned to the more exciting consideration of service conditions matters.

WOMEN'S STRUGGLE

Council's pledge of support

First of these was the evergreen "equal pay for equal work," prompted this year by an N.E.C. motion reaffirming the Association's support for the principle and pledging "continuous activity" until it was applied to all services. Moving this, MISS M. TOWNSON emphasised that the key to equal pay was in the hands of the government, since the employers had repeatedly refused to consider it until the government had given a lead by approving equal pay in the civil service.

As far back as May, 1920, she recalled, the House of Commons had passed a resolution declaring that it was "expedient that women should have equal opportunity of employment with men in all branches of the civil service . . . *and in all local authorities* and should receive equal pay." It was now 1951—and nothing had been done.

The only logical argument against equal pay was that it would cost money. But no one could truthfully say that, in 31 years, it had not been possible to apply it on a graduated basis. Whatever might be the reply of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the latest appeal by the civil servants, the N.E.C. would continue to press the claim on all the N.J.C.s (*cheers*).

It had noted with "misgiving, disappointment and regret," the British Government's view, expressed at the 1950 Conference of the International Labour Organisation, that this year's conference should put forward no more than a recommendation on equal pay, and not a convention which would impose a greater obligation on member states to give effect to it. The N.E.C. had sent a strong protest against this policy to the Minister of Labour.

Miss Townson asked that two amendments demanding a campaign be referred to the N.E.C., for the reason that, since equal pay was a national problem, any campaign designed to influence the Government must be conducted, not by NALGO alone, but by the civil servants and the teachers also. Its nature must depend largely upon the Chancellor's reply to the civil servants, and as soon as that was known, the Association's representatives would meet the civil service and teachers' representatives to discuss appropriate action. This was agreed—after MISS M. O. ROBERTSON, **Glasgow,** had voiced the hope that the N.E.C. would not misread "referred" for "deferred."

"Immediate adoption" demand

Miss Townson accepted on behalf of the N.E.C., a **Birmingham** and **Coventry** amendment instructing the N.E.C. to ask the staff sides of the various National Joint Councils to lodge a claim for immediate adoption of equal pay. But its mover, MISS B. M. SANDERS, **Coventry,** insisted on speaking to it. Expressing the hope that it would not be filed and forgotten until next year's Conference, she added: "We were told by the President that we were good little girls last year, in doing nothing until the salary negotiations had been completed. But we do not feel so good this year, and we are going to press our claim."

"We do not feel so good this year."

"Did the N.E.C. really press for equal increments when it made its salaries claim?" she asked. "I wonder. They are continually saying they are behind us. Let us see them in front for a change. Let us be the first trade union really to take action and not come in at the death (*hear, hear !*). The N.E.C. is pledged to continuous activity. Continuous activity in what? In the last two years it has spent £185 on the equal pay campaign. I hope that next year the treasurer will estimate for more than that. I ask all the gentlemen on the higher clerical grade whether they would do that work, with its responsibilities, for less than a General Division man gets at age 27?"

Conference, to a man, agreed that it would not, and adopted the amendment.

The next motion, by **West Midlands district** and **Coventry,** introduced another

Left: *London members march with teachers and civil servants to a recent equal pay demonstration in Trafalgar Square.* Right: MISS M. TOWNSON, N.E.C., *addresses the crowd from the foot of Nelson's column.*

"Charter as a minimum" policy rejected

familiar theme—"Charter as a minimum"—that this time was to have a less familiar result. The motion asked Conference to reiterate the policy laid down in 1946, 1948, and 1950 to regard the Charter as a minimum, and deplored the action of the staff side of the local government National Joint Council in having departed from that policy. Its mover, J. BESSERMAN, **Coventry,** challenging the statement in the Annual Report that to encourage branches to negotiate local improvements to the Charter "would imperil the working of the National Joint Council and all future progress through national collective bargaining, and, eventually, inflict grave injury upon the standards of the majority of the Association's members," claimed that it would do the reverse. Many branches believed that, by regarding the Charter as a minimum, they could benefit themselves and the Association as a whole—and many, in fact, had done so.

"The staff joint machinery which exists throughout the country and the activity of local branches," he declared, "is the life-blood of the Association, and any suggestion that the Charter must be regarded as other than the minimum would, in effect, be a death blow to the local Whitley machinery. If we believe in the Whitley machinery, we believe in its operation, not only at national level, but at district and local levels, and the work we do at the local level is as important as any other aspect of our work for the Association."

"Dominated by employers"

Seconding, T. E. BRIERLEY, **W. Midlands district,** pointed out that the Charter set out national scales, but nowhere did it say that they were standard scales. The NALGO negotiators appeared to have been dominated by the employers.

After Conference had approved, without debate, a **West Cornwall** amendment to delete from the motion the implied criticism of the staff side, W. P. SAYERS, **Poole,** moved a further amendment seeking to instruct the staff side to negotiate on a bilateral basis for acceptance of the Charter as a minimum. While his branch supported the staff side in agreeing with the employers that, as it now stood, the Charter was a standard, he said, it wanted to leave the door open for reversal of this decision. If the employers wanted to regard it as a minimum, they would do so. It should be recognised that local conditions might justify local improvements.

C. H. DODSON, **Coventry,** supporting the motion, suggested that, if the Charter were regarded as a rigid standard throughout the country, there would be continual difficulty when local conditions prevented employers from getting staffs. In Coventry—a "high cost" town—nine officers in one department alone had resigned on learning the terms of the recent award. They should not forget that the standard secured in the Charter was, to some extent, a result of the work of larger branches, in "high cost" areas, which had "dragged up the smaller branches to a reasonable level." They should not now be tied to the rate of Little Hogsnorton. The employers' side should be asked to do what some individual employers wanted to do—indeed, were forced to do, to get staffs. Alternatively, would the N.E.C. examine the whole structure of the Charter over the country?

C. H. Dodson

"We cannot go on like this year after year," he concluded, "with branches falling by the wayside and members feeling dissatisfied with their pay, when they know that in other parts of the country people are getting reasonable rates."

"Would be plunged back into chaos"

Replying for the N.E.C., and addressing Conference for the last time as leader of the staff side, E. A. S. YOUNG reminded delegates that the policy of the Association had been to secure a national Whitley machine through which to negotiate a national standard, and that had been done. Before then, the standard of salaries and service conditions throughout the country had been deplorably low. To achieve that national standard, they had had to overcome the opposition of many local authorities to giving up their individual rights. There had been branches, too, which, because they were enjoying better standards than others, were reluctant to enter provincial and national machinery.

The national machine had now been set up to ensure an orderly and progressive solution, on national lines, of service conditions problems. What had been the results? One was that NALGO was first in the field with a war bonus. That would not have happened had it been left to individual branches to negotiate for themselves. Now, when the employers were asked to agree that the Charter should be a minimum, so that Conference could say to branches: "There is the minimum, but if you can get a bob or two more on your own, go ahead," they had replied with an uncompromising "No!" That was simply because they were afraid—"as sometimes we are"—that unless they could keep the team together at national level, they would be plunged back into the chaos which existed before the National Whitley Council was established.

Mr. Besserman had suggested that many branches had been able to negotiate improvements on the Charter, but he was reliably informed that the number was very small—and for every branch which could negotiate local improvements, there were many local authorities ready to go in the opposite direction once it became known that local agreements were possible.

"Let us settle this question once and for all," Mr. Young concluded. "You have the constitution through your local joint committees, to put up to your provincial councils—which also have rights—any suggestions for improving the Charter. The future is not for me; it is for you, and if you are wise you will reject this motion, bend your energies to strengthening the machine, which is the bulwark of your service conditions policy, give the staff side all the help you can, and keep together in a united body through the National Joint Council."

N.E.C. advice upheld

The cheers which greeted this speech, and the subsequent rejection of the amendment, showed that, this time, Conference was behind the N.E.C., but Mr. Besserman insisted on his right to speak on the amended motion. Mr. Young, he declared, had unintentionally misled Conference. Coventry had not suggested that branches should look after themselves and be at the mercy of the employers. What it had suggested was that some employers were ready to accept the Charter as a minimum and, were they allowed to do so, would concede local improvements. This would not create chaos, and any divergence from the immediate Charter could only be in an upward direction. Mr. Besserman was going on to detail some of the improvements negotiated at Coventry, but Conference had heard enough and after drowning him with insistent cries of "Vote," resolved that he be no longer heard. Delegates did, however, restrain their impatience long enough to hear E. W. WIDDOWSON, **Cheshire,** oppose the motion on the ground that its adoption would endanger the standards negotiated for technical officers, before rejecting it by a substantial majority.

In view of this decision, Mr. Besserman announced that he would not move the next **Coventry** motion instructing the N.E.C. to authorise and encourage branches to negotiate local improvements to the Charter.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Call to branches and districts

Leaving service conditions for a few minutes, Conference turned to more domestic matters, starting with an N.E.C. motion affirming the need for 100 per cent membership in all fields of the Association's activities and calling upon district committees to review membership and all branches to "recruit all non-unionists."

Briefly moving this, H. R. JONES said that it was the Association's belief that the non-unionist owed a loyalty to his fellows in the common cause—and NALGO's achievements were proof of

"Recruit more members — but no poaching"

what could be done. Recruitment was essentially a branch job, in co-operation with district committees, and, particularly, with consultative committees, who could review progress and give results.

"End T.U. agreements"

After the N.E.C. had accepted, and Conference approved, a **Somerset** amendment substituting "work for the recruitment of" for "recruit," B. H. BRIGHT, **Acton**, moved his branch's more controversial amendment seeking to extend the field of recruitment from "non-unionists" to all non-members, and instructing the Council, with this object, to withdraw from agreements under which other unions could refuse to release from membership eligible officers wishing to join NALGO. The motion, he argued, was contradictory since, while setting the target at 100 per cent membership, it limited recruitment to those who were not members of any trade union. That no doubt derived from an agreement between NALGO and the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, under which each union agreed not to recruit members from the other without its prior consent.

B. H. Bright

Though that might seem good in theory, in practice it was "thoroughly bad and detrimental to the interests of NALGO" because the required consent could be, and was being, withheld on flimsy pretexts. It restricted the Association's right to recruit freely and violated the right of an officer to unfettered choice of trade union. His branch had lately had an unwelcome illustration of the operation of the agreement. When the local authority recently re-designated 15 servants as officers in the miscellaneous grades, 13 of them had applied to join NALGO, but the N.U.G. & M.W. had vetoed the application of seven, although it had never before had any officers at Acton as members, and NALGO alone was recognised.

"Need not fear competition"

It was said in favour of the agreement that it ensured good relations between the two unions at district and national level and that to withdraw from it would lead to open competition for membership between them. In practice, however, the agreement was being used by the other union to gain a foothold in NALGO's field of activity. NALGO need not fear competition; on the contrary, it had everything to gain, since, in its own field, it offered more than any other organisation.

Seconding, W. MARSHALL, **Wear Electricity**, put in an earnest appeal for the "miscellaneous" officer. Before nationalisation, he said, he was a local authority pre-payment meter collector, and his status as an "officer" had never been questioned. Now that the industry had been nationalised, he and his colleagues had been told that, "at the behest of that greedy monster uniformity," they must be handed over, without right of appeal, to the industrial field.

"We have been thrust into the wilderness," Mr. Marshall protested. "We cannot vote on a staff committee appointment; we cannot vote on a workers' committee appointment. As members of NALGO, classified as industrial workers, we are not eligible for one or the other. See what an *impasse* we are in as loyal colleagues of yours! The President, in his address, referred specially to the miscellaneous officer, and Mr. Robinson has said, 'We are all brothers.' Here stands a miscellaneous brother who, while the rest of you have been wondering whether you will get 20 or 14 per cent, has seen his colleagues who remained in local government enjoying a salary of £415, while those of us who were transferred must remain at £360 until the industrial workers receive an advance. That is shameful" (*hear, hear*!).

"We believe in trade unionism"

Opposing the amendment, F. HILSON, **Hyde**, suggested that discussion of agreements with other unions was beside the point—which was that branches and district committees must work hard to recruit non-members.

"We believe NALGO is a trade union," he declared forcefully, "and the more we shout about NALGO being a trade union, the more our voices will be heard. I am sick and tired of people telling me that we are members of an association and not a trade union. We believe in trade unions and 100 per cent trade unionism. For goodness' sake—once in a while—let us say the N.E.C. is right when it is right and give it our support" (*cheers*).

H. R. JONES, replying for the N.E.C., suggested that the movers of the amendment had made the common mistake of trying to prove the general by the particular. NALGO did not want to poach members from other unions, nor did it want other unions to poach its members. The two-way agreements were intended to operate with good will on both sides.

"NALGO did not want to poach"

Conference agreed, rejecting the amendment.

Call for "energetic campaign"

The Council also opposed the next amendment, moved by T. FERNLEY, **Manchester Gas**, calling upon the N.E.C. to "initiate an energetic campaign through the district committees and branches" to achieve 100 per cent membership. As it stood, he complained, the N.E.C. motion was "feeble, empty, and useless," and were it to be approved, nothing would be done. To attain 100 per cent membership called for planning and generalship, and that was a job for the N.E.C. It had planned the salaries campaign, and done it well; and he believed it could do the same for 100 per cent membership. A national campaign, backed by all the Association's resources and membership, the professional staff, and the public

". . . kindle a fighting spirit — and direct it effectively . . ."

relations department, could transform the position, waking up the apathetic members, among whom the non-unionist was bred.

"If we want 100 per cent membership," he concluded, "and if this is not just a pious sentiment, we must kindle a fighting spirit—and direct it effectively—to convince our members that we mean business, that there must be no more slackness, and that we are actuated by tremendous enthusiasm."

"Must be planned locally"

For the N.E.C., H. R. JONES reiterated that recruitment was a job for branches and districts. If a campaign was necessary, then branches and districts should plan it—locally. The assistance of the district officer was always available and advice could be obtained from Headquarters when needed. Branches could do the job without an N.E.C. campaign.

But Conference appeared to be evenly divided on the issue and, when a vote was taken, the President called for a count. This showed the amendment adopted by 463 votes to 453.

On the suggestion of the President, the next motion, from **Rochdale**, declaring opposition to compulsory membership as a condition of service, and recommending that the Association publicly declare its opposition to the "closed shop" principle, was referred to the N.E.C. for consideration.

'Closed shop' policy: Communist propaganda

On the same subject was the following **North Riding** motion instructing the N.E.C. to advise members, in circumstances similar to those which had recently arisen in Durham county, to refuse to disclose whether or not they were members of a trade union. Moving this, F. BOLLAND said that the practice adopted by Durham county council, of demanding evidence from its employees that they were members of a trade union, was contrary to the spirit of freedom on which our democracy was based, and it needed little imagination to see where it might lead. The world had seen the downfall of a country in which it had been necessary for the worker to belong to a certain party before he could earn a living.

"Can stand on our own feet"

As a branch officer, he often wished that some members would resign, and the rules provided that members could, in certain circumstances, be expelled. But were the Durham principle to become general, to expel a member would mean throwing him out of work. He was surprised that the N.E.C. was opposing the motion, because the President, in his address, had said that the Association did not believe in "closed shop by compulsion" and that NALGO did not want "press-ganged" members, but a 100

No "Press-gang" for NALGO

per cent membership of active volunteers. By voting for the motion, Conference would publicise the fact that NALGO was prepared to stand on its own feet and did not want any interference from the employers.

Opposing the motion, "laudable as its sentiments were," R. D. WHITLAM, **Bermondsey,** said that, while all agreed in supporting individual freedom, the fact that the advice offered could not be enforced made the whole thing ineffective. If members ignored the advice, would NALGO expel them? It would not—and the Association would be held up to ridicule.

For the **N.E.C.,** H. R. JONES, suggested that the "spot of bother" at Durham had attracted attention out of all proportion to the issue involved (*hear, hear!*). The relationship between the county council and the NALGO branch was good and there was no need to disturb it in the interests of a few non-unionists who were prepared to accept the results but not the responsibilities of trade unionism. The time to start scrapping was when some authority said they should *not* belong to a trade union (*hear, hear!*). "I will put it as simply as this," he concluded: "If you are ashamed to be a member of NALGO, support this motion. If you are not, reject it." (*cheers*).

Confirming Mr. Jones's statement, S. ROWAN, **Durham County,** said that there were 1,400 members in his branch; all loyal and ardent members, who had been in NALGO before the issue arose and were not ashamed to say so (*cheers*). Conference rejected the motion by an overwhelming majority.

Five unions recognised

A. J. RUSSELL, **Coventry,** followed with a motion seeking publication by the local government National Joint Council of the names of the "appropriate organisations" which, in paragraph 44 of the Charter, it recommended local authorities to recognise and officers to join. His object, he explained, was to sanction and stimulate the recruitment into NALGO of eligible officers now members of an organisation not recognised by the N.J.C. as "appropriate."

For the **N.E.C.,** A. E. NORTROP suggested that the issue was already clear. The N.J.C. recommended local authorities to recognise all the organisations represented on it. There were five of these—NALGO, the first and most important; the National Union of General and Municipal Workers; the National Union of Public Employees; the Transport and General Workers' Union; and the Federation of Health Service Employees. It was not for NALGO to indicate to any other organisation when and how it could secure representation on any particular negotiating machinery. In the light of this explanation, Mr. Russell withdrew his motion.

COMMUNISTS IN NALGO

"Keep them at arm's length"

Conference next entered upon another long and lively debate, arising out of the **Inglewood (Sevenoaks)** motion urging branches—in the words of the leading article in "L.G.S." for July/August, 1950—"to guard against Communist attempts to divert legitimate grievances and demands of members to their own ends; keep Communists and Communist propaganda at arm's length, and allow no hint or suspicion of ulterior motives to besmirch or misdirect what is a clear, straightforward and honesty policy." Its mover, J. L. CRAWLEY, was content to let the motion speak for itself, urging only that Conference should consider whether any opposition that might be voiced was sincere, or was no more than an attempt to make sure that members who caused dissatisfaction were not plucked out.

Seconding, B. C. NAYLOR, **Keighley,** said that delegates had seen how Communists had "wangled into other trade unions and caused discontent." As a democratic body, NALGO had to keep politics right out. Members would have observed how Communists have got among the civil servants, and what they had done to combat this infiltration.

"Avoid witch-hunt"

D. F. RAYNHAM, **Barking,** moved an amendment to delete from the motion all reference to Communism and substitute an affirmation that it was NALGO's policy to "oppose any political discrimination within the Association." The position, he suggested, was analogous to that of a housewife bothered by a street hawker selling winkles. The motion implied that she should leave her work and go out into the street with a shotgun to destroy him, whereas his branch suggested that all that was necessary was to put up a notice: "No Hawkers."

"Go out with a gun to destroy him"

Supporting the amendment, L. A. BAILEY, **Hackney,** regretted the appearance of the motion on the agenda: the less publicity given to Communism, the sooner it would collapse as the Commonwealth Party had collapsed as soon as people stopped organising meetings to attack it, thereby giving it the publicity its supporters wanted. The only way to combat the Communist Party was to "cut out" any member carrying on its "insidious propaganda," and help create a standard of living in which Communism could not thrive. Conference should avoid a witch-hunt which would present Communists as something they were not.

Opposing the amendment for the **N.E.C.,** in one of the ablest and most forthright speeches to which Conference had listened, C. J. NEWMAN pointed out that the motion was not talking about politics. The Communist Party was entitled to preach its doctrine and practise its precepts so long as the law of this freedom-loving land allowed it to do so—but it was not entitled to use the NALGO platform for that purpose (*hear, hear!*).

"Let them keep their politics out of NALGO"

"I, too, am sorry that this motion had to be put before Conference," said Mr. Newman, "but why is it there? It is there because, in the last two or three years, members have had the clearest possible proof of Communist propaganda in matters presented to Conference—NALGO matters, not political matters. Last year, a delegate from Bristol, a delegate from Birmingham, a delegate from London, and two or three others, all spoke to precisely the same brief. Where had it come from?—16, King Street! (*hear, hear!*). Yesterday, a speaker called Whitleyism a weapon. That might be the Moscow idea, but it is not the British conception, and it is not the NALGO conception. Whitleyism is not a weapon—it is the good old English way of sitting down at a table and hammering things out in a British fashion (*cheers*).

Weapon of discontent

"Let them keep their politics out of NALGO (*hear, hear!*). Look at the Glasgow amendment (asking Conference to "reiterate NALGO's traditional standpoint of avoiding party politics within the Association"). What does that suggest? All we Conservatives, Liberals, and Labour people will scrupulously observe that—but will the Communist Party? Not on your life! (*cheers*). You are only presenting them with a further cloak for their underground activities. When it is brought into the open, then their activity ceases.

"Trouble-making is their stock-in-trade; the hammer and sickle are their weapons—the hammer of discord and the sickle of discontent (*cheers*). That is what they are trying to use the NALGO platform for, and that is why Conference is invited to say 'Stop! Keep it out of NALGO!'"

The storm of applause which acclaimed this speech—the greatest given to any speaker during the four days—left no doubt that the overwhelming majority of delegates were behind Mr. Newman, and when C. R. GIBSON, **Bristol Electricity,** came to the microphone, the storm continued, indicating that Conference had no wish to hear him. But Mr. Gibson stood his ground until he won silence—which was maintained throughout his speech.

"No proof" of subversion

He began by insisting that he was attending Conference not as an individual, but as the representative of his branch, with the duty of carrying out the instructions of the branch whatever might be his personal views. That he had always done. "Members of my branch," he declared, "will tell you that they have no complaint of the way their delegate carries out his duties."

He opposed the motion, said Mr. Gibson, on the simple ground that it was the people who were "making all the fuss" about Communist propaganda who were themselves introducing politics. He rejected the contention that, last year, delegates voted for the salaries campaign because a few Communists had supported it. One delegate had said then that Conference had been led by the nose; but he suggested that 200,000 members of NALGO had agreed with that nose-leading.

"I have not at any time," Mr. Gibson insisted, "introduced politics into this Association. I am prepared to stand on my political views, but there is no need for the introduction of a witch hunt. Once you start witch hunts, you will not stop. If members believe that there are people acting contrary to the Association's interests, they can vote them out. If members are convinced that these people are breaking the rules of the Association, they can expel them (*cheers*). I suggest that nobody has brought, or can bring, proof that any member is acting contrary to the interests of the Association. Had such proof been brought, there would be a case for expelling the member concerned."

N. T. BACK, **Lowestoft,** opposing the amendment, recalled how, at the Conference service the previous Sunday, "the great NALGO congregation gave such

N. T. Back *Miss M. O. Robertson*

magnificent public expression and manifestation of the Association's patriotic and Christian foundations." It was inconceivable that NALGO should even accept Communists into membership, since Christianity and Communism were "utterly incompatible." Most local government officers detested Communism, and they should fight tooth-and-nail any tendency to allow NALGO's good name to be besmirched by the subversive activities of Communists and their friends. The British Peace Committee had been canvassing the support of branch secretaries, and they must guard against the aims of the Kremlin being insidiously foisted on them by such innocently-named organisations.

"Avoid party politics"

Conference rejected the amendment and next heard MISS M. O. ROBERTSON move that from **Glasgow,** calling on Conference to reiterate its traditional standpoint of avoiding party politics.

"This Conference," she declared, "is not the place to discuss party politics, or the pros and cons of Toryism, Labour—or even Scottish nationalism! (*laughter*). Political views are the private affairs of individual members and have no place in our deliberations. If they are allowed to be dragged in, the outcome will be discontent, strife, and disunity."

It was perfectly possible, Miss Robertson continued, for a member of a political party to be a good member of NALGO, and she knew acknowledged Communists whose work for the Association would constitute a proud record for many of the delegates present, and without which NALGO would have been the poorer.

"We are told, rightly we believe, that NALGO is democratic. Surely there is no semblance of democratic principle about a motion which wants to victimise any minority among the membership. 'L.G.S.' has said that there are not 95 Communists in NALGO—a minority of about ·0038 per cent. Are you afraid of ·0038 per cent?"

"The ·0038 per cent . . ." she was continuing, when C. J. NEWMAN intervened from the platform to ask: "What is a fatal dose of strychnine?" In the laughter and cheers which followed this remark, Miss Robertson decided that it was time to give way to the now evident impatience to vote.

"Some good Communists"

But T. SPENCE, **Scottish district,** was less sensitive, and, ignoring the calls of "Vote," insisted on having his say.

"Is the Communist Party," he asked, "prepared to accept democratic government?" (*Cries of "No"*). "I agree with you! (*laughter*). Does the Communist party member of NALGO put the interest of NALGO in the forefront of his affairs? (*Cries of "No"*). "I agree with you again," said Mr. Spence. "But, although I am opposed to the Communists, I am prepared to admit that there are good Communist members who act in good faith on behalf of the Association. I know individuals who have come to this microphone and, because of the suspicion in their minds, some of my fellow delegates immediately say, 'Oh, he is a Communist.' They say that because he starts to quote facts and figures . . ."

But at this point a delegate moved "That the speaker be no longer heard," Mr. Spence was forced to stand down, and Conference, refusing to listen to any more speakers, rejected the amendment by a big majority. It likewise rejected, without discussion, an **Islington** amendment on similar lines and, adopting the substantive motion, again by a big majority, adjourned for lunch.

T.U.C. affiliation move withdrawn

When delegates reassembled at 2.30, it was in the knowledge that there were still 138 items on the agenda and only 90 minutes in which to consider them—and this it proceeded to do with increasing speed. It referred to the N.E.C., without debate, a **Birmingham** motion recommending affiliation with the National Federation of Professional Workers, agreed to the withdrawal of an **Abertillery** motion urging immediate affiliation to the Trades Union Congress, and adopted, with N.E.C. support, a **Middlesex** motion instructing the N.E.C. to press for immediate legislation to enable employing authorities to make up the pay and protect

N.E.C. told to fight for higher overtime pay

the superannuation rights of reservists recalled to H.M. Forces and others likely to be affected by any call-up. An amendment to the last, seeking leave on full pay for reservists called up for 15 days' training, was referred to the N.E.C. for consideration.

Also adopted unanimously were :

A **Weston-super-Mare** motion, amended by **West Cornwall,** calling for "vigorous action," in the event of total or partial mobilisation, to secure make-up of pay, reinstatement, and protection of promotion prospects for all officers affected.

A motion by **North Western** and **Metropolitan districts** and **Hammersmith,** calling for immediate action, in view of the rising cost of living, to secure amendment of the Pensions Increase Acts 1944/7 to abolish the provisions concerning limitation of income, and provide increased allowances for all pensioners; and

An N.E.C. motion suggesting that the Minister of Health be asked to deal with anomalies arising out of the Local Government (Compensation) Regulations, 1948, and to receive a deputation to examine the new compensation code in the light both of the original representations made on it and the anomalies.

Education policy criticised

A further N.E.C. motion, formally moved by A. E. ODELL, pledging Conference support for the provision of education and training schemes designed "to ensure that the capabilities of officers are developed to the full in the interests of the service and of the officers themselves," reaffirming the Association's educational policy, and recommending members to participate in the facilities available, and particularly those provided by NALGO, met with unexpected criticism. This came from S. M. BOYCE, Southampton, who made four points :

A. E. Odell

Only one district—Yorkshire—had made contact with its Regional Council for Further Education ;

NALGO put too much stress on its Correspondence Institute and should put more pressure on local authorities to provide further education classes—to which teaching by post was "a poor second" ;

The Association had "tied itself too tightly to the cart of the Examinations Board" ; and

It was "behaving like an ostrich" in respect of entry standards and post-entry training.

Mr. Boyce was embarking on a lengthy criticism of the new provisions for standards of entry when his time expired. Conference refused to hear him further and adopted the motion.

Hastings and Bexhill Electricity branch having withdrawn its motion criticising the N.E.C. for disregarding Conference decisions and deciding major service conditions policy without first consulting branches and districts, and demanding a "structure" to provide for such consultation, Conference referred to the N.E.C. a **Salford** motion urging strict observance of the minimum standard for the admission of juniors to the service, together with amendments from **Devon,** seeking reconsideration of the standard in the light of the new general certificate of education; and by **Glasgow Gas,** suggesting a separate junior entrance examination of not less than "school certificate" standard.

A speedy compromise was also effected on the next motion and batch of amendments on post-entry training, Conference, on the suggestion of A. E. NORTROP, **N.E.C.,** adopting an amended motion declaring "unqualified support" for the policy of financially-assisted post-entry training schemes for the local authority and public utility services and directing the National Executive Council to secure the implementation of such a policy as speedily as possible. A further motion from **Plymouth,** seeking leave of absence and financial assistance for officers wishing to attend universities to read for appropriate degrees, was referred to the N.E.C.

OVERTIME UNAVOIDABLE

Present payments "unjust"

More interest was aroused by the next batch of motions and amendments on payment for overtime. First came a **Scottish district** and **Glasgow** motion instructing the N.E.C. to seek higher overtime rates for Sundays and public holidays. Moving this, J. LIVINGSTONE, **Glasgow,** stressed that it was not intended to conflict with the recognised policy that overtime generally should be discouraged. But overtime had to be worked, and, because of seasonal rushes, could never be altogether abolished. And, since work on Sundays and public holidays involved greater sacrifice than work on weekdays, the penalties on employers should be higher.

To this, C. W. SMITH, **West Hartlepool,** formally moved an amendment instructing the Council to seek a reduction in the number of hours to be worked at plain-time rates, and better rates for Saturday afternoon and Sunday work, irrespective of the number of hours worked during the week. It was unjust, he urged, that an officer should have to work ten hours' overtime a week before exceeding the plain-time rates.

Opposing both motion and amendment, J. B. MCCANN, **N.E.C.,** reminded Conference that no part of the Charter had been conceded with greater reluctance than that dealing with payment for overtime. The employers had stressed that the enjoyment of good staff conditions involved the acceptance of obligations. If they insisted on manual workers' overtime conditions, they might also have to accept manual workers' hours, holidays, and sick pay.

"We do not wish to descend to the manual workers' policies," he said, "chattering over different rates : time-and-a-quarter for one duty and time-and-a-half for another. We want the principle of a decent rate for the job and a willing acceptance by the officer of all the responsibilities that reasonably go with his job (*cheers*).

Apparently sharing this view, Conference rejected both the amendment and the original motion. But it was soon to change its mind in response to a clarion call from F. HILSON, **Hyde,** to rouse itself and not let the N.E.C. have all its own way.

F. Hilson

The motion—as moved with incorporation of amendments by **Glasgow Gas** and **Birmingham**—instructed the N.E.C. to negotiate amendments of the Charter to provide that overtime should rank for payment after completion of the first half hour, that all completed quarter-hours should be paid for, that payment should be at the rate of 1¼ plain-time rates for the first two hours, 1½ plain-time rates thereafter and for Saturday afternoon work, and double rates for Sunday and public holidays. The salary "ceiling" for overtime payment should be raised from £495 to the maximum of A.P.T. VII.

"Do we lie down—or do we fight ?"

Although delegates, said Mr. Hilson, were feeling a little tired and fed up, it was not time for them to go to sleep, as the N.E.C. wanted, until his motion had been discussed. Mr. McCann had said that the employers had been most reluctant to concede the overtime provisions of the Charter.

"Who decides what NALGO does," he demanded, "the employers or NALGO?" If the employers say they are not prepared to make a concession on overtime, do we accept that lying down, or do we fight?" If officers worked overtime, why should they not be paid for it? (*hear, hear*).

For the N.E.C., J. B. MCCANN warned that the demand was one with "most dangerous reactions and repercussions." The employers had made it clear that the only reason they could see for officers getting more favourable conditions than manual workers was that the officer did not get those "bits of overtime and casual payments" which the manual worker enjoyed. There was no question of NALGO being unwilling to

Calls for longer holidays and better G.D. scale

fight—its recent history proved that. While the N.E.C. would keep overtime under review, delegates must appreciate that the real danger to their standards was the continually rising cost of living. If Conference adopted these "most dangerous" proposals it would run a grave risk of creating bad will amongst the employers and imperilling the Association's other objectives.

But Mr. Hilson returned to the microphone to repudiate this argument. Scornfully rejecting the Council's promise to keep the question under review, he declared: "We—the rank and file delegates—decide the policy of this Association. I do not suggest that the result can be achieved overnight, but we can give a lead on the policy we intend to follow." Finally he wished to remind the N.E.C. of the words of the psalm:

"He hath put down the mighty from their seats
And hath exalted the humble and meek."

The aside from the President, "You don't sound very meek to me, sir!" was lost in the storm of cheers which greeted this last fling. A show of hands failing to give a decisive vote, the President called for a count, on which the motion was lost by 491 votes to 407. Despite the lateness of the hour, supporters of the motion insisted on a card vote, and this reversed the decision, the motion being carried by 86,855 votes to 74,332.

Extra leave plan

Thus stimulated, Conference next turned to a **Crosby** motion, asking for a scale of extra leave for long-service officers on a basis of one extra day for every three years' service above fifteen, with a maximum total entitlement of 24 working days. With this, delegates agreed to incorporate amendments by **Preston** and **Glasgow Gas,** calling, respectively, for a minimum of twelve days' statutory, general, national, and local holidays in addition to the leave prescribed in the Charter; and for a widening of the terms of the motion to embrace all the services covered by the Association. E. C. R. CHINN, **N.E.C.,** having said that the motion, as amended, was acceptable to the Council, Conference adopted it. On an assurance from Mr. Chinn that the Association's claims for better annual leave were already before the National Joint Council, it was agreed to refer the following three motions, from **Hyde, East Midland District,** and **Poole and district,** with their amendments—all suggesting improvements in the holiday scale—to the N.E.C.

A. G. OLDFIELD, **Lancashire county,** sought an additional car mileage allowance in respect of each passenger an officer is required to transport in the performance of his duties, but, on hearing from E. F. BACON, N.E.C., that a National Joint Council sub-committee had approved an augmented scale of car allowances, which would go to the full N.J.C. for ratification on July 11, Conference rejected the motion. [Details of this new scale, which was adopted by the National Joint Council on July 11, are set out on page 550.]

The N.E.C. accepted, and Conference approved without debate, a motion by **West Midland** district and **Birmingham** that NALGO should discuss with other federations representing non-industrial workers ways and means of obtaining the immediate enactment of a statutory code, similar to that for factories, including such matters as proper working space, ventilation, lighting, underground rooms, washing facilities, and so on, together with a **Hull and district** amendment calling on the N.E.C., to take every possible step to safeguard existing working conditions and rectify adverse conditions.

GENERAL DIVISION PAY

Maximum at 26 urged

After referring to the N.E.C. a **Liverpool** motion instructing the Council to take immediate action to persuade local authorities to adopt paragraph 20 of the Charter, recommending adequate provision for staff welfare (in which Liverpool included sports and canteen facilities), Conference turned to what proved to be its final business, a series of motions on General Division salaries. First of these was a motion by **Metropolitan District** and **Barking,** instructing the N.E.C. to seek, at the earliest possible moment, "considerable improvement" in the salaries of the lower age groups in the General Division. This was referred to the N.E.C., together with amendments seeking to extend it to the whole of the General Division and to the national health service, to reduce the age at which the maximum is reached to 28 or 26, and to provide a minimum salary of £260 at 21 for both men and women.

Proposed scale to be considered

The N.E.C. opposed the next motion, moved by S. WRIGHT, **West Riding,** putting forward a revised General Division scale designed to secure that the officer who entered the service at a lower age was paid more, and reached his maximum sooner, than the officer entering at a higher age. (The scale proposed was published in the April "L.G.S.," page 417, item 49.) In the motion as originally tabled, separate scales had been put forward for women, but Mr. Wright asked leave to incorporate a **Halifax and district** and **Liverpool** amendment deleting these and making the proposed scale apply to both men and women. He was prepared also, he said, to incorporate a **Salford Gas** amendment extending the motion to the nationalised services, but this was withdrawn from the floor.

For the **N.E.C.,** G. R. ASHTON opposed the motion but suggested that it would like to consider alternative scales proposed in a **Hyde** amendment, namely:

Male	*Age*	*Female*		*Male*	*Age*	*Female*
£		£		£		£
160	16	128	..	280	22	224
180	17	144	..	300	23	240
200	18	160	...	325	24	260
220	19	176	..	355	25	284
240	20	192	..	385	26	308
260	21	208	..			

Conference agreed, and approved the President's suggestion—made on the supposition that, since it was now practically four o'clock, all other amendments would be withdrawn—that the Hyde amendment stand as the substantive motion. This was adopted, but S. ROWAN, **Durham County,** insisted on moving a further amendment, suggesting a departure from the wage-for-age principle after the age of 20 by introducing a separate scale for juniors and a General Division ranging from £300 × 20 — £425 for men and £240 × 20 — £340 for women. He had scarcely started his speech, however, when the President interrupted to announce that, since it was now four o'clock, the amendment and the remaining 70 items on the agenda stood automatically referred to the Council.

INDUCTION OF PRESIDENT

Mr. Bevan's fine record

Now, with the great hall and the "strangers' galleries" filled to capacity, the scene was set for the traditional ceremony of induction of the new President. First, however, Mr. Riley bade farewell to members who were leaving the N.E.C., referring particularly to E. F. BACON and E. A. S. YOUNG.

Responding to calls for a speech, Mr. Young compared himself with the Welsh parson who, asked to preach his farewell sermon, announced that his text would be, "The years have passed: what have they taught me?", and that the sermon would be followed by the anthem, "Search me, O Lord" (*laughter*). But, he continued, speaking with obvious emotion, although he had sometimes been in a minority of one, his career in NALGO had been very happy (*loud and prolonged cheers*).

Then, after welcoming two of NALGO's past-presidents, SAM LORD and FRANK HARROD, the President introduced his successor for the year 1951-2, LEWIS BEVAN—the Association's [twentieth President in its 47 years' history. Mr. Bevan, he said, was born at Neath, Glamorganshire, in 1897, and entered the service of the Glamorgan county council as a junior in September, 1912. Except for war service from 1914 to 1919, he remained with that council until 1948, when he was transferred to the national health service as senior administrative officer at Hensol Mental Deficiency Colony.

He had had a long career of service to NALGO; in 1920, he was elected to the executive committee of Glamorgan branch and was its chairman from 1934 to 1937. He became chairman of the South Wales and Monmouthshire district committee in 1940, and had been its honorary secretary since 1944. In 1941, he was elected to the N.E.C., and from the start had devoted himself primarily to service conditions work, being chairman of the service conditions and organisation committee from 1946 to 1950. A great believer in Whitleyism, he had played a prominent part in the joint negotiating machinery for the local government service, being a member both of the National Joint Council (of which he was staff side chairman from 1946 to 1948) and of the South Wales and Monmouthshire provincial council. Since his transfer to the national health service, he had been one of the leaders of the staff side of the administrative and clerical functional council, and one of its representatives on the General Whitley Council for the health services.

"A man of the people"

"But," the President continued, "I prefer to talk about Lew Bevan as the man you and I know. He is a man of the people, and it speaks well for the people when they throw up the like of Lew Bevan. He comes, like a good many of us, from the ranks, and he is all the better for that, because if you come from the bottom you know what it is to have worked hard and played hard (*cheers*).

"Notwithstanding his pleasant manner and his ability to mix—and he can mix it! (*laughter*)—he is also a man of high ideals and a sportsman. He is a worker, a man of

"A sportsman—and a good mixer."

ability and—what is more important—a man of adaptability. From a very long and close association with him, I know he has the power to think and feel deeply about a cause. And that is what we want."

Addressing his successor directly, Mr. Riley continued:

"You are about to embark on a year which will bring many trials and tribulations. You are to be the leader of a great trade union of 200,000 men and women. They will give you all the support, sympathy, and affection that you deserve and I know you will be a good leader. I warn you, however, that the job is a strenuous one. There is only one other I would have preferred to hang this collar on—my old pal HARRY ALLEN, who left us some years ago—and Lew Bevan will know how much that means."

Members of the council listen attentively as the President introduces his successor.

Then, amid the loud cheers of delegates, Mr. Riley invested the new President with his badge of office.

Replying, Mr. Bevan said that, for his wife—who sat at his side on the platform—and for himself, this was the proudest moment of their lives. He had been deeply moved by Mr. Riley's words and the way Conference had received him, and he was particularly proud to be the first President of NALGO elected from the nationalised services (*cheers*).

"It says a great deal for the democratic spirit of our great Association that you have elected as your President a representative of a membership group of less than 15,000 out of your gigantic membership of 200,000. I hope to meet many of you in your districts and branches, and I will do everything in my power to carry out the duties of the office to the best of my ability, and at all times to maintain the prestige and traditions of this Association and to follow worthily in the footsteps of my predecessors"

Mr. Riley: "A giant among men"

It was his first duty, he continued, to thank the retiring President for his service during the year and for the excellent way in which he had conducted the Conference (*cheers*).

"How can I adequately describe those services?" he asked. "Ted Riley is a veritable giant among men; probably the most outstanding figure that we have ever known in our Association (*hear, hear!*). I remember the time, years ago, when he was a delegate from Liverpool—what a thorn he was in the side of the N.E.C.! (*laughter*). You have seen his conduct on the platform. I marvel at the agility, alertness, and energy he has put into this Conference, the clarity of his mind, and the wonderful things he has done for the Association and the N.E.C."

As delegates cheered and broke into a full-hearted rendering of "For he's a jolly good fellow," Mr. Bevan presented the retiring President with a replica of the badge of office he had recently surrendered. For several minutes, the cheering and pounding of feet grew louder, until Mr. Riley rose to reply. Thanking Mr. Bevan, he confessed that he "hardly recognised the ruddy fellow!" who had been described in such glowing terms. He had enjoyed his year of office tremendously, meeting people all over the country.

"I thank you all for the wonderful way you have recognised my wife," he added. "These ladies do make a sacrifice: I was at home only three weekends between Christmas and the end of May. That illustrates what happens to your family life when you take on a job like this."

Mr. Riley then moved votes of thanks to the mayor and council of Blackpool, to the branch Conference committee and especially JOHN UNDERWOOD, an ex-member of the N.E.C., and A. E. FITTON, a present member and the Conference Secretary; to CANON WILLIAM YATES, the mayor's chaplain, for his inspiring address at the church service; and to the Association's staff for their "continued deep interest, far outside their normal duties, in all that goes to make for the good of the Association."

"A grand team"

Replying on behalf of the Conference committee, Mr. Fitton expressed appreciation of the co-operation he had received from Blackpool corporation, the Blackpool Tower and Winter Gardens Company, and Headquarters' staff, and thanked especially the president of the Blackpool branch, A. S. HAMILTON.

Replying for the staff, J. H. WARREN, general secretary, acknowledged the thanks which had been so warmly expressed—"All the more because we feel them to have been deserved" (*cheers*). The annual report was in itself a testimony to the strenuous year the staff had had. "You have a grand team, second-to-none," he said, "and I tender them my heartfelt thanks for their loyalty and their most efficient help." In a reference to Mr. Riley, Mr. Warren concluded:

"We are old friends. I remember his rise as a NALGO politician, and his advance to the status of a NALGO statesman, and that is what he is today (*cheers*). But statesman or not, we count him as one of the truest friends of Headquarters and there is a comradeship of spirit between us which has never been surpassed" (*loud cheers*).

Then, as the cheering blended once more with the notes of the organ, delegates joined hands and sang "Auld Lang Syne." Their week's work was done, and, in happy mood, they brought to a close NALGO's thirty-fourth Annual Conference.

Conference Meetings

PROBLEMS of special concern to members in the electricity, gas, transport, and national health services, and to branch and district education correspondents, public relations officers, and magazine editors, were discussed at separate meetings held during Conference week.

The first four meetings were mainly concerned with the claims for higher salaries, upon which reports were presented to the full Conference and are reported elsewhere. Other matters raised included:

Electricity

L. G. MOSER, national organising officer, said that lengthy discussions throughout the year had failed to remove the fundamental difference between employers and staff on payment for overtime. Though both sides agreed that overtime was undesirable and should be cut to a minimum, they disagreed on the method. Whereas the staff side argued that the best way to reduce overtime was to pay for it, the Boards' members believed that it could be stopped by reporting examples of excessive overtime to the District Joint Council. Mr. Moser urged members to try that method, however ineffective they thought it might be. By so doing, they could establish the facts upon which the staff side could most strongly build its claim.

The demarcation of commercial staffs between the National Joint Board and the National Joint Council remained unresolved, but some progress had been made. On other demarcation issues, more definite progress could be recorded, and agreements now provided for some categories of draughtsmen, tracers, print room operators, telephone operators, and storekeepers and timekeepers whose duties were mainly administrative or clerical. Agreement had also been reached on matters relating to maternity leave, removal expenses, travel expenses, and motor-car and motor-cycle allowances—although costs had risen so rapidly that, in the staff side's view, the car allowances were already out of date and being reviewed.

After more than three years' negotiations the agreement constituting the National Joint Managerial and Higher Executive Grades Committee would be signed within a few weeks. This body would deal, in the main, with people who occupied posts graded on salary scales rising to £1,250 or over, and the staff side would consist of six members of the A.M.E.E., five of E.P.E.A., and five of NALGO. There would be various subcommittees, one for "managerial grades," (now defined as those on scales rising to more than £1,500 p. a.), with the A.M.E.E. occupying all the staff side seats, and others for non-managerial accounting, administrative, and secretarial and legal staff respectively: on each of these, NALGO had five seats and the A.M.E.E. two.

Mr. Moser was disappointed that the B.E.A. had not completely recognised the Association's position in relation to the managerial panel, because the bulk of the non-engineering staff covered by it were NALGO members. Those members would realise, however, that NALGO's position on the main committee would enable it to continue to watch their interests and, in addition, give them that personal service and protection, particularly in the legal field, which only an association with its resources and experience could give.

Gas

L. A. GARRATT, organising officer for gas staffs, told gas delegates that, although he appreciated that area gas boards must watch expenditure if they were to continue to provide a gas service at a price the consumer was willing to pay, it was a mistaken policy to expect an efficient service while paying inadequate salaries to those who did the day-to-day administrative and technical jobs. He had noted in advertisements a recent tendency to lower salary standards in the industry. That would only create a feeling of discontent among existing staffs and do nothing to attract the type of officer who would be needed in the future, when he hoped fuel supply would become normal, and the gas industry would have to face more competition from other services.

The negotiating machinery was now settling into its stride, and negotiations during the past year had been carried out in an atmosphere of good will. The employers had dealt with one or two matters which the staff side considered should have been discussed jointly, and he hoped that both sides would realise the full value of the Whitley machine. Not all the decisions had been popular: the payment for overtime by a bonus had been unpopular and had caused much dissatisfaction. It was now under review.

NALGO had played a major part in establishing the National Joint Standing Committee for the intermediate grades and in negotiating an agreement for scales of pay and conditions of service for them, and had taken a full share in the difficult task of reaching a satisfactory settlement on the termination of the co-partnership schemes. The background knowledge and experience it had acquired in negotiations in other services over a number of years had been of utmost value. Although a specialist department dealt entirely with matters affecting gas members in precisely the same way as an industrial union, there was the additional advantage of consultation with sections covering other services.

A constitution for a national joint council for senior officers in the gas industry had now been agreed between the Gas Council, NALGO, and the Gas Officers' Guild, and the new council was to hold its first meeting later in the month. (A report of this meeting is given on page 551.)

Transport

JOHN LANCASTER, organising officer for transport staffs, said that, whether the recent salary increases in municipal passenger undertakings were considered adequate or not, transport members in other fields would be glad to secure equal standards. The National Consultative Committee recommendation that application be made to raise the minimum to £345 per annum had not been pressed, in view of the claim for an all-round increase in salary scales, but that point, as well as the problem of penalty payments for Saturday and Sunday work and time worked on public holidays, was now receiving the attention of the Transport Advisory Sub-Committee of the National Joint Council.

Mr. Lancaster wished he could say that NALGO had secured gains in the company passenger transport field equal to those in the local authority field. But it had not been so, and until there was negotiating machinery the difficulties would remain. NALGO would make every effort to establish that machinery.

Agreements had been negotiated on behalf of certain staffs in the North-Western Road Car Co. the Rhondda Transport Co., the South Wales Transport Co., and the Trent Motor Traction Co., and negotiations were taking place with other undertakings. In Scotland, negotiating machinery had been established, in which NALGO had taken a leading part.

Last year's hope of establishing the Association's just claim to representation on the negotiating machinery in the road haulage field had not been realised. The N.E.C. had taken every practicable step: there had been meetings with the representatives of other unions, under the auspices of the T.U.C., and discussions with the Road Haulage Executive and the British Transport Commission. The Transport Commission, however, would not accept NALGO's claim, and in these circumstances, the N.E.C. decided that it could not go further.

The National Joint Council for the Salaried Staff of the Waterways Divisions had now had a year's experience and had worked reasonably well, but had met with considerable difficulties. It was in an easy position to create precedents which could be quoted by negotiators in other sections, and because of that, the Executive had been careful not to create quotable precedents.

In the discussion which followed, G. EDWARDS, Crosville, expressed concern at the activities of other unions, and the lack of action by NALGO. J. E. N. DAVIS, chief organisation officer, queried

(Continued on page 549)

Congratulations

to the following students of the NALGO Correspondence Institute who passed the first Clerical Division Examination, April, 1951.

ADAMS, W. A., *West Ham*; ALDWORTH, E. W. B., *Kent*; ARMSTRONG, W. V., *Southampton*; ATKINSON, L. E., *Kingston-upon-Thames*; AUBREY, J., *Bedwellty*; BAILEY, J. S., *Devon*;

BALCOMBE, L. T., *West Ham*; BAKER, E. J., *Somerset*; BAKER, R., *Birmingham*; BARBER, K., *Manchester*; BARLOW, H., *Lancashire*; BARSON, F., *Blackwell*; BARTER C. W., *Hertfordshire*; BEGENT, R. J., *Maidenhead*; BENNETT, C. E., *Richmond Main Sewerage Board*; BENNETT, J. E., *Dartford*; BIRKETT, H., *Colne*; BLAKE, M. D., *Wimborne*; BLAKER (Miss), D., *York*; BLUNDELL, T., *Manchester*; BOND, R. W., *Somerset*; BOOTH, E. L., *Surrey*; BOWSTEAD, W., *Newcastle-upon-Tyne*; BRADLEY, S., *Anglesey*; BREWER, W. S., *Haverfordwest*; BROOKS (Miss), J. K., *Southgate*; BROUGH, A. H., *Birmingham*; BRYANT, C. J., *Swansea*; BUFFHAM (Miss), G. M., *Grimsby*; BULL, A. S., *B.E.A., Rugeley*; BURLEY, R. F., *Brighton*; BURNETT, P. J., *Essex*; BUTLER, F., *Rochdale*;

CAME, R., *Shropshire*; CARTER (Mrs.), H. F., *Lancashire*; CHADWICK, S., *Birmingham*; CHARLES, J. W., *Willesden*; CHATFIELD, G. W., *Staffordshire*; CHOLMONDELEY, R. *Darlington*; CLARK, B., *Kent*; CLARKE, G., *Gateshead*; CLIFFORD, F. J., *Plymouth*; COLES, B. T., *Oxford*; COLLICK, R., *Leeds*; COOKE, J. W., *Fleetwood*; COOPER, E., *Salford*; COTTON, N. W., *Gloucester*; COTTRELL, K. J., *Worcestershire*; COULTON, M. H., *Westmorland*;

DAVIES, F. D., *Shropshire*; DAVIS, R. N., *Hemel Hempstead*, DAVIS, W. F., *Wembley*; DAVISON, L. H., *Kensington*; DEAN, E. C., *Grimsby*; DEARLOVE, J. D., *Kent*; de BOLLA, R. J., *Orpington*; DOBBS, W. H., *Gloucestershire*; DONNELLY, W., *Westminster*; DOWSE, M. V., *Worcestershire*; DUCKWORTH, J. A., *Lancashire*;

EASTER, D. J., *Berkshire*; EASTWOOD, J., *West Riding*; ELLIS, G. S., *Smethwick*; ELLWOOD, J., *Middlesex*; EMMANUEL, J. A., *Swansea*; ESSERY, J. W., *Newport*;

FAIRLAMB, R., *Glamorgan*; FLEET, J. P., *Plymouth*; FLEMING, R. G., *Devon*; FRANCIS, T. E., *Welshpool*; FREER, D. J., *Birmingham*; FOSTER, B. E., *Hull*; FUDGE, V. G., *Bath*;

GATES, E., *Salcombe*; GENTRY, B. C., *Glamorgan*; GIBBS, J. W., *Southampton*; GIBSON, J., *Durham*; GLADWIN (Miss), P., *Banbury*; GODDEN, D. A., *Brentford & Chiswick*; GOOSTREY, K. C., *Sale*; GOSLING, J. E., *Lindsey*; GOTT (Miss), B. A., *Rochdale*; GOULE, R. N., *Barry*; GRAHAM, J. W., *Kirby in Ashfield*; GRANT, C. P., *Cornwall*; GRIFFITHS, E. G., *Surrey*;

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IZABY, D. E., *Kent*;

JACKSON, M. E., *Wimborne & Cranborne*; JENNINGS, R., *Preston*; JOHNSON, K. C., *Spalding*; JONES, T. E., *Swansea*; JONES, W. O., *Anglesey*; JONES, W. R., *Anglesey*; KAY, C., *Manchester*; KAY (Miss), E., *Denton*; KELLY, A. S., *Westminster*; KIMBER, L. L., *East Grinstead*; KIRTON, V. J., *Lindsey*; LACEY, D. G., *West Ham*; LANDER (Miss), E. R., *Welwyn Garden City*; LEWIS, N. R., *Stroud*; LITTON, L., *Somerset*; LOWE F. E., *Nottinghamshire*;

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what other action could be taken in view of the recent National Arbitration Tribunal award, but emphasised that officers would not improve their position by leaving NALGO in favour of other unions which would not, anyway, be able to obtain higher rates of pay. Company staffs could not expect to receive and enjoy local government standards of remuneration and service conditions without a hard fight, for it had taken twenty years for local government staffs to secure their present standards.

Health

G. W. PHILLIPS, organising officer for health staffs, told delegates that, in its counter-proposals to the salaries claim, the management side of the Administrative and Clerical Staffs Council had suggested replacement of the present General, Clerical, and Higher Clerical and A.P.T. divisions by a series of grades A to G, with a further grade H, for specified posts only, to replace the present specified grade for senior regional hospital board headquarters staffs. It proposed to reserve for later consideration the salaries of designated posts, including those at present within the A.P.T. grades. After several meetings, during which proposals and counter-proposals were considered, the Council considered a further revision of the management side's proposals, which represented the most that it could offer to meet the staff side's view. The employers' final proposals were rejected because, the staff side argued, the first grade should not be less favourable than the local government General Division, and that assimilation increases for the higher grades should be no less than the increases in similar grades in local government.

Expressing concern at the frequency with which issues which should have been settled within the negotiating machine were referred to arbitration, Mr. Phillips said that that had happened at least sixteen times, although the local authorities' Whitley machine had resorted to arbitration only once. He was sure that, unless there was a genuine desire on the part of both sides of the Whitley Councils to reach agreement, the machine in the national health service could not function satisfactorily.

T. H. WATERHOUSE, **Birmingham Regional Hospital Board**, asked whether the management side of the Whitley machine was not dominated by a permanent batch of Ministry officials, who were too frightened to take any decision without reference to the Treasury, which, in turn, was always prepared to "pass the buck" to some arbitration body outside. Mr. Phillips replied that, whilst the decisions of the Whitley Councils were recommendations to the Minister, the machine had been set up to be a real bargaining body. So far, no recommendation by a functional council had been turned down, and he could only presume that that state of affairs would continue.

Ancillaries meetings

THE EXCELLENT progress made during the year by the NALGO ancillaries was reported to the annual general meetings held at Blackpool on June 12. The chairmen were: SAM LORD, Logomia; T. NOLAN, Provident Society; and W. STROTHER, Building Society.

Logomia

After a highly successful year, during which funds had increased by £77,000, the total funds amounted to £1,287,375. Although costs of stationery and equipment had substantially increased, administrative costs had been reduced by 1¾ per cent, and premium rates remained at the pre-war figures.

The quinquennial valuation of the life fund had shown a surplus of £101,146, and it was possible to declare a bonus of £1 6s. per cent, with every hope of improving upon that bonus rate in the future. The fire revenue account showed a net premium income of £20,757, which with burglary and employer's liability accounts amounted to £35,790, an increase of £5,220 over the previous year.

After transferring £14,505 to general reserve funds, there remained a balance of £11,970.

Provident Society

The quinquennial valuation reports had similarly shown excellent results on the Provident Society's work, and a reversionary bonus of £2 per cent per annum was declared on the death benefit scheme for each of the past five years, and all previous bonuses doubled. Members whose assurances had been in force since 1926 would thus be credited with as much as £16 bonus payable on death.

The hospital and nursing home scheme had been equally successful, and benefits had also been extended. A cash benefit of 5s. per day would be paid to members receiving in-hospital treatment in respect of which the fund was not being called upon to meet maintenance and surgical fees.

Building Society

Although there was a reduction in income from investors compared with the previous year, £7,325,761 stood to the credit of investors at the end of 1950, an increase of £306,746. In order to attract more money, the Society decided to offer investment facilities to the general public, and amended its rules to enable it to do so. It was hoped, said Mr. Strother, to increase the inflow of new capital with which to provide a more stable mortgage service, although that service would be available to NALGO members *only*. There was a possibility that in the coming year there would have to be an upward revision of interest rates, both on investments and mortgages.

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SERVICE CONDITIONS NEWS

Local Government N.J.C. approves new scheme of car allowances

A NEW SCHEME of motor car allowances, to operate from July 1, 1951, was approved by the local government National Joint Council on July 11.

Under the scheme, the former scale of mileage allowances with a guaranteed annual minimum and increased allowance for old cars, is replaced by two scales: one for "essential users," to which will be added a lump sum payment; the other for "casual users."

The new scales, which take into account all the relevant factors prevailing at June 5, 1951, are:

Essential users:

Class of vehicle	L.S.* £	Rate per mile First 7,200 m.p.a.	Excess
Not exceeding 8 h.p. or 1,014 c.c.	42	3¾d.	2¼d.
Exceeding 8 h.p. or 1,014 c.c. but not exceeding 10 h.p. or 1,214 c.c.	48	4¼d.	2¾d.
Exceeding 10 h.p. or 1,214 c.c. but not exceeding 12 h.p. or 1,414 c.c.	54	4¾d.	3d.
Exceeding 12 h.p. or 1,414 c.c.	60	5¼d.	3¼d.

*L.S.: lump sum allowance

Casual users:

Class of vehicle	Rate per mile
Not exceeding 8 h.p. or 1,014 c.c.	6½d.
Exceeding 8 h.p. or 1,014 c.c. but not exceeding 10 h.p. or 1,214 c.c.	7½d.
Exceeding 10 h.p. or 1,214 c.c. but not exceeding 12 h.p. or 1,414 c.c.	8½d.
Exceeding 12 h.p. or 1,414 c.c.	9½d.

(NOTE: The horse-power basis is to be employed only in the case of a car registered before January 1, 1947, and the cubic capacity factor is to be employed only in the case of a car registered for the first time on or after January 1, 1947.)

The casual users' scale carries the proviso that the user shall not at any mileage figure receive more than he would have received had he been entitled to the essential user's allowance.

In the interests of uniformity, the N.J.C. recommends that the 12-month period over which allowances are paid shall be from April 1 to the succeeding March 31. For the current financial year, the system of guaranteed minimum payments and mileage rates operative under the existing scheme will continue in force until June 30, and the amounts payable will be calculated on a proportional basis. For the last nine months of the financial year (July 1 to March 31) payments will be calculated on a proportional basis under the revised scheme (i.e. the lower mileage rates will become operative for mileage in excess of 5,400 miles, i.e. nine-twelfths of 7,200.)

Similarly, the allowances payable to a newly-appointed officer will be calculated on a proportional basis. For example, an officer with an eight horse-power car whose total service in a financial year is five months would receive 3¾d. a mile for the first 3,000 miles—five-twelfths of 7,200—and 2¼d. a mile for mileage in excess of 3,000.

The N.J.C. also revised its recommendations on:

Provision of a motor-car—condition of employment: to provide that local authorities should not make it a condition of employment that officers shall provide cars for official use unless their posts are graded in or above A.P.T. Grade V. (The original provision specified a minimum salary of £350.)

Assisted purchase scheme: to provide that loans to officers for buying cars under the scheme provided in the Charter will, as hitherto, be repayable by monthly instalments with interest over such period, not exceeding four years or the estimated life of the car, whichever is the shorter, as may be approved, *except that in the case of cars not more than three years old as at the date of purchase the maximum loan shall be five years.* The italicised clause constitutes the revision of the former recommendation.

Full details of the revisions and how they relate to the existing scheme have been sent to branches.

Other decisions reached by the N.J.C. included:

Class "Z" and class "G" reservists: Special leave with pay will be granted on the following scale, so long as the present recall of these reservists is limited to 15 days:

Officers with annual leave entitlement of 21 days or less—8 working days;

Officers with annual leave entitlement of more than 21 days—6 working days.

The balance of the period of absence will be treated as special leave without pay unless the officer wishes it to count, in whole or in part, against his annual leave entitlement. This agreement is in respect of this year only.

Post-entry training—financial assistance: Pending a decision on the operative date of the scheme of financial assistance to officers undertaking courses of study adopted by the N.J.C. on July 26, 1949, employing authorities shall operate either that scheme or the system of monetary grants recommended in paragraph 29 of the Charter.

Overtime: In the calculation of overtime payments, the London "weighting" allowance shall be ignored. (This decision also applies to Miscellaneous officers.)

Miscellaneous officers—grading of posts with emoluments: The post of an officer now graded in the Miscellaneous scheme, who was graded in the Miscellaneous division of the Charter at the time of the 1948 consolidation and whose gross salary on consolidation (as a result of adding an agreed proportion of his bonus to his cash salary) was less than that contained in the consolidated grade, should be graded in accordance with the salary scales of the Miscellaneous scheme, and the question of deduction in respect of emoluments received shall be a matter for determination by the employing authority.

Officers temporarily undertaking additional duties: In sub-paragraph (1) of paragraph 21 of the Charter, which reads: "An officer who is called upon, by reason of illness or leave of other officers, to perform duties outside the scope of the post he occupies is not entitled to additional remuneration." the word "illness" shall include maternity leave.

Grading of engineering and surveying assistants: The operative date for the re-grading of posts under the N.J.C.'s decision of April 25, 1950 (which added the Institution of Mechanical Engineers and the Institute of Electrical Engineers to the list of professional bodies whose qualifications should be recognised for purposes of grading), shall be April 25, 1950.

London "weighting": No decision was made on the staff side's application for an increase in London "weighting," and negotiations are continuing.

Pay rise for electricity junior grades: Seniors' claim going to arbitration

AT A MEETING on July 17, the electricity National Joint Council approved salary increases, with effect from June 1, for the general clerical grade, shorthand and typing grades, machine operators, and telephone operators.

Deadlock was reached, however, on the claim for higher clerical, administrative, and commercial staff. After long negotiation, the Boards' members made a final offer to increase grades 1 to 9 by £40, but the trade unions insisted that they could not accept less than £50 on each of these grades, and the claim has, therefore, been referred to arbitration. It was agreed, however, that any award made should operate from June 1.

The new general clerical grade provides for two classes—A and B—but the allocation of staff to those classes applies only to new entrants (i.e. those appointed after July 17, 1951). Normally, new entrants over 26 years of age will be appointed to Class B.

The salary scales and notes covering "Increments" and "Definition of Grade" in the agreement of March 23 1950, are now replaced by:

General clerical grade

Class A (routine duties under well-defined rules and close supervision):

Age	Annual Salary Men	Women	Age	Annual Salary Men	Women
	£	£		£	£
16 ..	150	120	22 ..	270	216
17 ..	165	132	23 ..	290	232
18 ..	180	144	24 ..	310	248
19 ..	200	160	25 ..	330	264
20 ..	220	176	26 ..	355	284
21 ..	250	200			

Class B (higher duties, but still largely regulated by routine and under supervision):

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375	300	410	328
395 ..	316	430	344

NOTES: (1) An employee shall proceed from Class A to Class B, provided that an Electricity Board is prepared to certify that his duties are carried out satisfactorily and that he is capable of performing all the duties of Class B. An employee who is not given a certificate to proceed to Class B shall have the right of appeal through the usual channels.

(2) Increments in Class A shall date from an employee's birthday. Increments in Class B shall normally be granted annually subject to satisfactory and competent service; an Electricity Board may, however, at their discretion, grant accelerated increments. If an increment is withheld, the reasons shall be made available to the employee concerned.

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The existing scale has been increased at each step by the same amount as the women's general clerical grade, and is similarly shortened.

Hope of agreement on health staffs' claim

HOPES FOR A satisfactory settlement of the health staffs' salary claim—without resort to arbitration—were brighter after a meeting of the special negotiating committee of the Administrative and Clerical Staffs Council on July 10.

The committee considered the management side's revised proposals for increasing salaries in the General, Clerical, Higher Clerical, and A.P.T. grades, and a considerable measure of agreement was reached. Certain outstanding points were to be considered by the full Council on July 23 (after we went to press).

In submitting the proposals in the first instance at a meeting of the Council on July 2, the management side had stated its wish to avoid arbitration, if possible, but had emphasised that the new proposals were without prejudice to the disputes already reported to the Ministry of Labour, which would proceed normally should the new proposals be unacceptable as a basis for negotiation. Since the proposals were, however, an improvement on the management side's previous offer, the staff side agreed that they merited consideration and they were therefore remitted to the negotiating committee.

Senior gas officers' council to consider pay issue

THE FIRST meeting of the Senior Gas Officers' Joint Council was held on June 26. After the constitution and rules had been formally approved, the officers' representatives indicated several matters which, in their view, need early consideration, including salary levels in the industry and their effect on recruitment; the position of officers whose responsibilities have increased but who have received no corresponding increase in salary; the absence of merit increases in certain areas; a cost-of-living increase—already granted in all other grades in the industry; emoluments; and schemes of sick pay and holidays. The Gas Council's representatives promised to consider these points as soon as possible.

P. COL. H. C. SMITH, C.B.E., D.L., deputy chairman of the Gas Council, was appointed chairman of the Joint Council, and J. R. W. ALEXANDER, Gas Officers' Guild, was appointed vice-chairman. DR. A. B. BADGER, industrial relations officer to the Gas Council, and J. E. N. DAVIS, chief organisation officer, NALGO, were appointed joint secretaries.

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Branch magazine prizewinners

Winners of the branch magazine competition for 1950, announced at the Conference meeting of editors, were :

Printed magazines

1. **Newsreel,** Surrey County (editor, R. S. B. Knowles)—380 out of a possible 450.
2. **Camera Principis,** Coventry (editor, J. A. Yates)—362 marks.

Duplicated magazines

1. **Calling Croydon,** Croydon (editor, L. J. A. Moir) and **Arbekay,** Kensington (editor, G. Herrick)—equal first, each with 324 marks.
2. **The Confluence,** Castleford (editor, A. W. J. Mitchell)—313 marks.

New magazines first published in 1950

Printed, **Sitrep,** Ipswich (editor, D. V. Norton)—294 marks ;

Duplicated, **The Penzance Journal,** Penzance (editor, R. D. I. Charlesworth)—280 marks.

The President presented certificates for each winning magazine and book-tokens to the winning editors.

CLERICAL DIVISION EXAMINATION
December 3rd and 4th, 1951

The next Clerical Division Examination will be held on 3rd and 4th December, 1951. Entries must be received by 1st September, 1951.

Candidates must have attained the age of 17½ years by 1st December, 1951. *Entry fee two guineas.*

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION EXAMINATIONS

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For further details, syllabus and entry forms apply to The Secretary,

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Secretaries Hall, 28, Fitzroy Square, London, W.1

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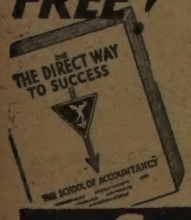

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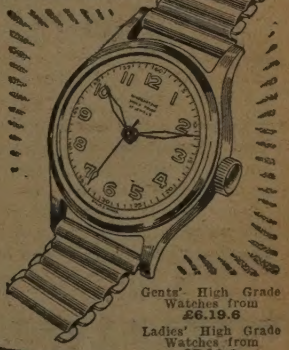

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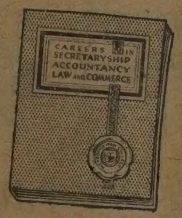

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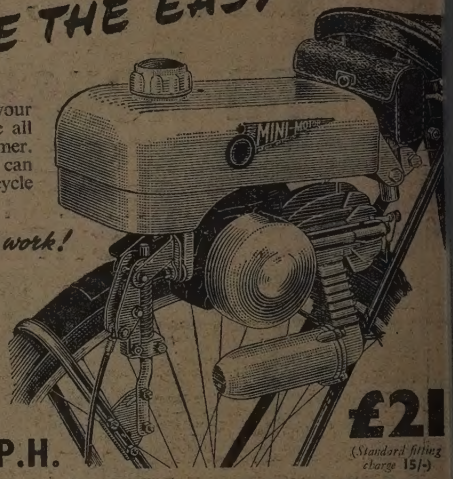

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